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TEACHING WITH DRAMA:
A COLLABORATIVE STUDY IN INNOVATION

by

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ABSTRACT

Educational drama's potential to involve and engage students in learning experiences across the curriculum, but especially in the English language arts, has been well documented. Research indicates, however, that the majority of elementary classroom teachers use educational drama strategies infrequently within their classroom instructional practice. This collaborative action research study explored how two classroom teachers, who participated in a summer school class in educational drama pedagogy, could be supported by a university researcher/educational drama specialist as the teachers experimented with integrating drama teaching strategies.

Throughout the seven month duration of the research process, the researcher assisted the teachers in planning and teaching literature-based English language arts lessons and units utilizing educational drama teaching strategies. Since the teachers taught at different grade levels and were using different selections of children's literature, specific planning decisions and classroom action plans were developed in teacher/researcher dyads. Both teachers and the researcher met five times as a triad to reflect on classroom action plans and share common concerns during the course of the research project. The researcher participated as data collector, demonstration teacher, resource provider and observer in one Grade 4-5-6 classroom, one Grade 8 classroom and one Grade 9 classroom.

Data sources included the researcher's reflective journal, field notes, full transcripts of all teacher/researcher planning meetings and collaborative meetings, transcripts of interviews with each teacher, and students' written responses to the literature and to the research project. The researcher provided each teacher with full sets of all data that were collected in meetings and in classroom action.

The researcher used a process of constant comparison to read and reflect on collected data throughout the second half of the research process. Seven themes were identified as influencing teachers' understanding and use of drama pedagogy in their

English language arts instructional practice. These themes were: a) accountability, b) constraint, c) authority, d) creativity, e) concern, f) connections, and g) praxis. Each theme was discussed in relation to understandings revealed by a) each teacher, b) the researcher, and c) the collaborative group.

Implications for further research related to supporting teachers' use of educational drama strategies in their classroom practice and to school-university partnership research are explored.

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CHAPTER ONE

FINDING THE SCRIPT

The Play as Metaphor

> Theatre is born when the human being discovers that it can observe itself; when it discovers that in this act of seeing, it can see *itself* -- see itself *in situ:* see itself seeing.
>
> (Boal, 1995, p.13)

The choice of a theatrical play as the overarching metaphor for this work was made after completing the data collection phase of the research. In itself, the choice of play as metaphor indicates my own changing perceptions of the role of educational drama in the English language arts classroom. When I began this work, I considered educational drama at the elementary school level to be something apart and separate from theatre. For me, drama was a teaching tool to be used as a way to achieve language learning objectives and purposes in the classroom. It was not that I did not value theatre -- I valued it highly. I have spent many years of my life performing and working behind the scenes in theatrical productions. But theatre was my hobby, my recreation and not to be confused with my profession as an elementary school English language arts educator -- albeit an elementary school English language arts educator **who used drama.** The bolding of the last three words in the previous sentence visually represents the standpoint of self-identification I had achieved before I began the work that comprises the content of this dissertation.

But a good playwright never gives away the ending of the play in the prologue lest the audience, satisfied with such premature revelation, departs the theatre in the opening scene. A wise playwright begins the play at the beginning. A wise researcher, however, realizes the importance of describing to the audience how the play came to exist in the first place. This chapter will detail what occurred before the curtain rose.

Background to the Study

Different playscripts are created from different beginnings and different processes. Some are produced by lone playwrights sequestered away with word processors and singular visions they wish to communicate to an audience. Others are written through the collaborative efforts of a group of players. In this latter type of play, frequently called a "collective creation", "the script is not the product of one individual's vision; every member of the collective participates in formulating it" (Goffin, 1995, p.195). The play that is this research study began as the former and transformed into the latter.

The initial "singular vision" for this research study unfolded over my two decade career as an elementary school educator; a career that included several years of generalist classroom teaching experience (mostly in third, fourth and fifth grades), several more years as a university lecturer in Curriculum Studies at the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan, a two year stint in curriculum development for Saskatchewan Education and a three year term as a college supervisor of student teaching. My interest in educational drama as a teaching tool was born early in this time period. I completed my Master's of Education in 1978 with a thesis titled *The Effects of Creative Drama and Oral Discussion Activities on Fourth Grade Students' Written Response to Poetry.* Heavily influenced by the work of Brian Way (1967) and Peter Slade (1954), I became, upon completion of my academic work and subsequent return to classroom teaching, a very rare phenomena in the world of the elementary school. I became "a teacher who used drama". Because there were so few of us, especially in my home province of Saskatchewan , I found myself to be considered something of an "expert" in the area.

My early educational drama instructional practice was informed by a strong and vehement rejection of "the performance model". When Brian Way (1967) said "communication to an audience is beyond the capacities of the majority of children and young people", I believed him (p.3). For the most part, my classroom drama happened "behind closed doors" and focused on providing students with opportunities to enter the

make-believe world of drama for their own enjoyment and self-development. The act of preparing students for the annual Christmas concert invoked guilty feelings of betraying my principles as an educator. I feared that I might be causing some irreparable harm to the young souls in my charge by putting them up on stage to perform a product for an audience. But I was the drama "expert" on staff and that meant that I was expected to direct the Christmas production. The students enjoyed it, the parents enjoyed it and, (I can now admit), I enjoyed it too. But I still felt guilty.

When I left the classroom in the late 1980's, I became involved in researching and writing the drama strand of the new K-5 English language arts curriculum for Saskatchewan Education and teaching English language arts and educational drama methodology classes in the College of Education, University of Saskatchewan. This work provided me with the opportunity to replenish my knowledge base by reading extensively in recently published educational drama pedagogy. I reacquainted myself with Dorothy Heathcote and became familiar with her "drama for understanding" approach to classroom work. I had encountered her first on film in *Three Looms Waiting* (BBC, 1971) in an undergraduate English language arts class years before and had responded as many young neophyte teachers did to that film: "I could *never* do drama as well as *that!*". The university teaching and curriculum development work, both undertaken when I had more drama teaching experience and more self-confidence, provided me with a clearer understanding of the theoretical underpinnings of Heathcote's work (Wagner, 1979). I recognized that drama in the classroom could be more than a way to help students develop self-esteem (Way, 1967). It could also be used as a teaching and learning tool.

Further reading allowed me to forge stronger connections between my knowledge of educational drama pedagogy and my professional commitment to teaching English language arts according to Goodman's (1986) "whole language" philosophy. When I was a classroom teacher, I heard David Booth make a presentation at a local teacher's convention in the early 1980's. As I listened to him talk about the power of drama to help

children develop and extend their language learning. I recognized an explicit articulation of the insights I'd gained during my M.Ed. research and nurtured through my own classroom teaching practice. Drama could "help children extract new meanings from their experiences and ...communicate those meanings in the form of efficient, coherent responses" (Booth, 1987, p.15). Although Booth's full articulation of the "story drama" model was not published until the 1990's (Booth, 1994), I took a preliminary journey through his "imaginary gardens" and recognized the potential contribution drama could make to the way children construct the meaning of those "real toads" they encounter in life and literature (Booth, 1985). My search for the playscript was narrowing.

The curriculum development work opened up many opportunities for me to present inservice workshops about the integration of drama and the English language arts to teachers throughout Saskatchewan. Teachers were enthusiastic participants in the dramas I developed around such popular selections of children's literature as Munsch's (1980) *The Paper Bag Princess* and Gilman's (1990) *Grandma and the Pirates*. How I hoped they would do what they said they would do and take those dramas back to use in their own classrooms! How I longed to take those dramas into classrooms myself! I did have a couple of opportunities to work through parts of these dramas with other peoples' students but I never had the time to take them as far as I knew they could go. I regretted that I hadn't had Booth's model in hand when I'd been situated in my own classroom. I had to content myself with doing dramas with pre-service education students and inservice classroom teachers. It was exciting work but I wanted to see it happen with children. My "singular vision" was narrowing.

In 1991 I began a three year term position as a college supervisor of student teachers. I anticipated the opportunity to witness our new Saskatchewan English language arts and Arts Education curricula in action. At last I was going to be able to see drama in context (Bolton, 1986) and story drama (Booth, 1994) happening with real children in real classrooms. It didn't happen. In the three years I supervised student teachers, I witnessed

two drama lessons at the elementary school level and both were literal re-enactments of stories the children had read. Both were taught by student teachers and in both cases the classroom teachers expressed their delight that the student teachers were "teaching drama" because they never got around to doing it themselves. It was a disillusioning and discouraging experience for me because I had invested so much belief and hope in the curriculum development process. I couldn't believe that teachers weren't as excited and passionate about the new curriculum as I was. I couldn't understand why drama, finally "on the books" in an official government document, was missing completely from the classroom. This experience gave form to my "singular vision" and convinced me that it was time to write "the play".

Preparing the Stage

My initial vision for this doctoral research project was singular but it was far from focused. I knew I wanted to work with using educational drama strategies in the elementary school English language arts: I was sure I wanted to involve inservice classroom teachers and I was quite definite that I wanted my own participation in the research to go beyond the observer role. Over a period of years, I had successfully integrated educational drama into my own practice as a classroom teacher. I had also witnessed many of the rewards that students reaped from participating in drama . Teaching with drama was part of my own "personal practical knowledge", that complex of experiences, knowledge and tacit understandings that supports and guides each individual teacher's professional decision making process (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). I was sure that I had some worthwhile educational drama teaching strategies and suggestions to offer teachers. I knew that sharing my own experience with inservice teachers would be an important part of the work I wanted to do. I needed to discover how this goal could be accomplished within the parameters of educational research. The disparity between the promise of theory and the reality of practice impressed me as the most relevant of educational problems. More specifically, I wanted to explore how I might support

teachers who were interested in learning about educational drama and who were willing to take the risk of extending their own teaching practice to embrace those strategies and conventions that form the lexicon of educational drama pedagogy.

The first step in this process was to articulate my purposes and goals in the form of questions that would capture my intentions and provide me with a tentative path to follow in framing my study.

Research Questions

My study is guided by the following research questions.

1. What understandings do teachers articulate through language (written and oral) and action (instructional practice) of their own personal and professional growth and the changes in knowledge, attitudes and instructional practice that relate to their experience:

   a) in the University of Alberta summer school course, International Studies in Process Drama?

   b) of participating in collaborative meetings with the researcher which utilize the action research cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Carson, Conners, Ripley & Smits, 1990)?

   c) of engaging the researcher as a professional resource and service provider according to their own needs and interests?

2. What understandings does the researcher articulate through language (written and oral) and action (instructional practice) of her own personal and professional growth and changes in knowledge, attitudes and instructional practice that relate to her collaborative work with participating teachers as all participants co-construct her role in the research process?

3. What factors appear to influence the perceptions of all participants (students,

teachers, and researcher) regarding their responses to planning, action (classroom instructional practice in educational drama in the English language arts) and reflection throughout the course of the research project?

In keeping with issues related to the tentative nature of emergent design in collaborative research (Tom, 1996, p.347), these research questions needed to be flexible enough to embrace the contributions, insights and purposes of all participants in the collaborative process while still providing a framework for conducting the research.

Preparation and Reflection

The playwright who sits down to write a play with nothing more than a single idea drawn from his or her own experience may produce a playscript but this script may not engage an audience at a deep emotional level. Good theatre requires central ideas that reflect the concerns and passions of more than one individual. Good theatre also demands that the playwright reflects on how his or her own personal experience is connected to the concerns and experiences of a potential audience. Only when this process is complete is the playwright's vision ready to be communicated to an audience.

My first task was to recognize the elements of my own past educational drama teaching practice and beliefs about educational drama in an explicit way. Connelly and Clandinin (1988) stress the importance of using tools for reflection in order to assist teachers in coming to know themselves (p.33). I searched for who I was as a "teacher who used drama" within the context of constructing my own teaching narrative. This process allowed me to clarify my own beliefs and prepared me to hold those beliefs up for scrutiny in juxtaposition to the research findings and theoretical underpinnings of educational drama pedagogy as articulated by leading authorities in the field. The following section is an attempt to make those connections explicit.

Grounding Personal Beliefs and Practices in the Context of Research and Theory

1. The Status of Drama in Schools

The central concern or problem that drove my interest in exploring educational drama practices and pedagogy with practicing classroom teachers was that I believed very few elementary classroom teachers were using any drama at all in their instructional practice. My initial belief was based on my own experience (previously noted) and the opinions of the few other drama educators with whom I was in contact. Was this belief supported by research and expert opinion?

A review of recent research findings which chronicle teacher attitudes towards drama and use of educational drama teaching practices in elementary classrooms confirmed that my individual experience was mirrored in a broader context. Fewer teachers than ever were actually using drama in their classrooms (Stewig, 1984; Kaaland-Wells, 1994). Stewig's (1984) survey of one hundred elementary teachers revealed that only eight teachers included drama activities in their classroom programs on a daily or weekly basis (p.29). Since the 1980's were a decade of extensive theoretical work and publishing in the area of educational drama pedagogy (O'Neill, 1982; Robinson, 1983; Bolton, 1984; Neelands, 1984; Booth, 1985; Tarlington, 1985; Verriour, 1985; Byron, 1986; Bolton, 1986; Booth; 1987; Morgan & Saxton; 1987; Wagner, 1988; Courtney, 1989), one might expect the more recent survey results compiled by Kaaland-Wells (1994) and Hundert (1996) to reveal a significant increase in the amount of educational drama activity in elementary classrooms. Kaaland-Wells discovered that even though eighty two percent of her sample (n=224) of Tacoma, Washington elementary teachers agreed that drama was a valuable teaching strategy, only six percent used drama as a daily part of classroom instruction (p.22).

Recent survey research in Canada provided a more promising picture of teachers' use of drama. Hundert (1996) surveyed Ontario teachers (n=184) to discover that although

almost all (ninety nine percent) respondents reported a positive attitude towards drama, eighty percent stated that drama was a low-status curriculum area in the school system (p.27). Hundert's figures reflect that Ontario teachers -- especially those with 11-20 years of teaching experience -- do use drama more frequently than their American counterparts. Her study revealed that thirty percent of the sample claimed to use drama at least once per week in classroom instruction (p.29). In light of recent political developments in Ontario schools, as characterized in the 1997 teachers' strike, these percentages may not reflect the current status of drama in Ontario schools. Financial cutbacks to education usually affect arts education programs first.

2. Changing the Status of Drama on an Individual Basis

While quantitative survey results provide a broad picture of educational trends, the in-depth exploration of teachers' practice afforded by qualitative research studies reveals some of the reasons behind those trends and points the way to possible solutions. Once I was assured that my analysis of teachers' attitudes towards drama was grounded in a broader context than my own experience, I started seeking research findings that suggested ways to change those attitudes and increase teacher use of drama in the classroom.

Garcia (1993) suggests that his case study of the one teacher in an Arizona State University organized peer mentor group who continued to use drama after the mentor group disbanded provides a picture of the support needed by beginning drama teachers. His case study subject, a young teacher who used drama on a regular basis, was being assisted and mentored by two experienced drama teachers on her staff and supported by a principal who trusted her to make wise professional decisions (p.11). In another more recent study, Garcia (1996) further develops his understanding of how and why teachers do use drama in their classrooms. His findings suggest that drama specialists who want to support classroom teachers to include drama more consistently in their instructional practice

must "have questioned their own purposes and observed the social setting in which teachers carry out their daily tasks. Those who do not assist teachers in finding compatibility between drama activities and teaching philosophies may only create problems and impediments" (Garcia, 1996, p.11). Garcia's findings were crucial in helping me begin to transform my singular vision into a more collaborative "collective creation".

Since approaches to using drama are culturally bound (Courtney, 1988, p.176), a Canadian study of specialists supporting teachers' use of drama provided insights within my own geographic and cultural context. Edwards and Payne (1994) worked with a group of Edmonton teachers in an ongoing drama support group. They state: "teachers often work out of sight and hearing of each other, plan and prepare lessons alone and struggle on their own to solve most of their instructional, curricular and management problems"(p.20). They also suggest that the teachers in their group valued opportunities to have someone who was knowledgeable in educational drama pedagogy come into their classrooms to work with them and their students. Their study did not allow as frequent opportunities for this type of collaboration as participating teachers would have liked. They learned that when teachers were provided with peer support and specialist support for using drama, they were much more willing to take the risks necessary to integrate drama into their instructional practice. The implications suggested in this study helped me to shape my research framework.

In order to ground my developing picture of how drama specialists might support teachers in the context of English language arts programs, I considered the experience of Flynn and Carr (1994) who worked as a drama specialist/teacher team to integrate drama activities with students' response to literature. Generalist teacher, Gail Carr, suggests the success of their mentoring relationship when she says of her students after their drama work: "It seems that having been in the situation gives them a different feeling about the literature... The drama has made it concrete for them. It also made it more interesting and fun" (p.43).

It is in consideration of this teacher's response that I move from a discussion of the status of drama in schools and approaches that may change that status to a discussion that may be even more basic to configuration of the playscript that is this research. Why should teachers integrate educational drama into their English language arts programs? It seemed to me that making literature "more interesting and fun" were not specific enough reasons for undertaking the responsibilities and demands of a research project. My work needed to be grounded more deeply in a reasoned theoretical rationale.

3. Rationale: Integrating educational drama pedagogy in the English language arts

I believe that when children are given the opportunity to enter the "as if" reality of imagined experience in drama, they return to the "real world" with a deeper understanding of why people act the way they do, of how conflicts may be resolved and problems solved in the arena of human interaction and of what it feels like to "walk a mile in someone else's moccasins". I believe that children may then take this deeper understanding, combine it with their own experience of life and of literature, and communicate new insights about what makes us human through speech, writing and physical response. I also believe that the act of communicating their insights allows students to construct richer meaning from their experience and extend their understanding of what it means to belong to the human race. This creed drives my determination to work in the area of educational drama and to promote an increased use of educational drama in elementary classrooms. I realize, however, that this is a creed constructed over a period of many years of practice, reading, thought and reflection. It is a creed that celebrates the importance of each student's creative and individual voice in contributing to the harmony of many voices working for collaborative and co-operative purposes. It is <u>not</u> a creed that translates easily into curriculum goals and objectives which can easily be measured by standard evaluation practices such as paper and pencil tests. Like many drama specialists, I am driven to defend and justify my creed again and yet again.

To support my creed I turn to other voices more widely known and credible than my own. Some of these voices come from the broad context of current learning and intelligence theory. Others are situated more specifically in the theoretical connections between educational drama pedagogy and oral and written language learning objectives. The voices of language learning theoreticians and researchers seem especially crucial to reasoning a place for educational drama in English language arts instructional programs.

3.1 Educational drama and Learning/Intelligence Theory

Establishing connections between the claims of educational drama and learning and intelligence theory requires a certain "leap of faith" since the outcomes of drama are characteristically difficult to measure in quantitative terms (Neelands, 1984; Morgan & Saxton, 1987; Tarlington & Verriour, 1991). Drama is a group activity and, as such, does not lend itself to individual testing practices (Booth, 1987). It must be accepted that some of the most important learning children do is the very learning which cannot be measured since this learning "deals with the vicissitudes of human intention" (Bruner, 1986,p.16).

According to Bruner (1986), we do not learn about the world of human interaction in the same way that we learn about the more systematic and ordered worlds of science and mathematics. The logico-scientific mode of thought we utilize to construct our understanding of the physical world seeks "to make a world that remains invariant across human intentions and plights" (p.50). It is in the narrative mode of cognitive functioning that we are able to construct our understanding of how people interact with each other: encouraging learning in the narrative mode requires a different approach to education. Educators cannot rely on the transmission model of education to develop children's cognitive growth in the narrative mode of thought. Bruner, in emphasizing the importance of nourishing the child's ability to construct meaning and understanding about the storied world of human relationships, offers a crucially important challenge for educators:

> When and if we pass beyond the unspoken despair in which we are now living ... a new breed of developmental theory is likely to arise. It will be motivated by the question of how to create a new generation that can prevent the world from dissolving into chaos and destroying itself. I think that its central technical concern

> will be how to create in the young an appreciation of the fact that many worlds are possible, that meaning and reality are created and not discovered, that negotiation is the art of constructing new meanings by which individuals can regulate their relations with each other.
>
> (Bruner, 1986, p.149)

The structures and conventions of process drama provide children with windows into many possible worlds where they may, in community, negotiate and construct imagined realities in order to better understand the concrete reality of the world in which they live.

Drama involves children in exploring and experimenting with spoken language, in communicating with each other through movement, gesture and facial expression and with negotiating imagined realities in a group context. Gardner's (1993) multiple intelligences theory includes three intelligences (linguistic, bodily-kinesthetic and interpersonal) which reflect and contain the kind of learning opportunities provided by educational or process drama. A fourth -- intra personal intelligence -- may also be linked to drama through the claims made by Way (1967) that drama experience builds a child's sense of self-worth and self awareness. Although Gardner's description of the kind of school that would support and develop all intelligences features the arts as central, he tends to emphasize assessment of the products of learning above learning process considerations. This product emphasis may explain why he includes theatre rather than process drama in his proposed educational framework.

Gardner's product orientation contrasts sharply with Nachmanovitch's (1990) celebration of the power of play and the creative process in and for itself:

> Collective free improvisation...invites us into whole new kinds of human relationships and fresh harmonies, in that structure, idiom and rules are not dictated by any authority, but created by the players. Shared art making is, in and of itself, the expression of, the vehicle for, and the stimulus to human relationships. The players, in and by their play, build their own society.
>
> (Nachmanovitch, 1990, pp.98-99)

Although we can neither measure the development of human relationships with formal evaluation instruments, contain the skills needed to interact with others in textbooks nor prescribe how truly creative improvisations will unfold in curriculum documents, we do have an ethical responsibility as educators to guide our children towards creative society-

building. Denying this responsibility leads us, according to Nachmanovitch, to "produce uniform, media-minded grown-ups to feed the marketplace..." (p.116). Process drama provides an instructional container which can encourage the kind of collective free improvisation described by Nachmanovitch.

If collective free improvisation leads students into new kinds of human relationships and fresh harmonies, as Nachmanovitch postulates, one can assume that such work requires students to possess well developed cooperative skills. Goleman (1995) identifies an aspect of human intelligence which fosters positive human interaction and contributes to cooperative society building. Goleman lists seven characteristics of emotional intelligence which contribute to a child's ability to learn collaboratively: confidence, curiousity, intentionality, self-control, relatedness, capacity to communicate, and cooperativeness (p.194). All seven may be developed and practiced through educational drama work. Through shared problem-solving and negotiation of imagined realities students learn self-control, relatedness, the capacity to communicate and cooperativeness. When students are provided with opportunities to assume the roles of decision makers and powerful individuals in group drama work they build confidence in themselves. The creation of imagined realities that are inherently consistent for all the players requires children to develop a high degree of intentionality. In acting out their plans and reflecting on the consequences of their own dramatic actions, children nourish their own curiousity about how different people will behave in different contexts. Drama does, indeed, provide opportunities for the development of emotional as well as creative intelligence.

Courtney (1989) explores the importance of metaphorical thought in the development of human intelligence and relates his understandings directly to the power of "as if" dramatic play. Metaphoric thought allows us to relate our inner world of imagination to the outer world we perceive through our senses within the symbolic medium of dramatic action. According to Courtney, metaphor is the construct which binds thought,

action and medium together as a unified whole. Courtney makes a further distinction between *metaphor* (which presents two different things as identical in a temporary relationship) and *metonymy* which signifies whole to part relationships or contiguous relationships of one thing to another (p.186). Metonymy allows us to experience the "as if" or imagined reality of drama and the reality of the "real world" in what seems to be a simultaneous experience. The ability to experience two worlds (real and imagined) co-existing in the same space and time is one indicator of an individual's ability to tolerate ambiguity and paradox. Opportunities for metaphorical thought also create a place where aesthetic, emotional and intellectual operations may converge to move children to higher levels of understanding and expanded human awareness (p.194).

I have established connections between educational drama practices and current learning or intelligence theories in an effort to rationalize the importance of including educational drama in the classroom context. Although many educational drama theoreticians and practitioners argue for educational drama as a discipline in its own right (Bolton, 1986; Wagner, 1979; Way, 1967; Morgan & Saxton, 1987, Neelands, 1990), current educational trends (i.e. the emphasis on standardized achievement testing, technological literacy) suggest that drama may not achieve a central place in the elementary school curriculum for some time to come. Because language use is central to communicating through most dramatic forms and structures and because children's literature provides rich contextual material for drama work, the language arts may provide the most appropriate location for educational drama practices in today's classrooms. But in order to gain entry into language arts programs, educational drama specialists and theoreticians have been required to make explicit the connections between educational drama experiences and oral and written language growth and development. Since this study is located within the context of English language arts instructional practice, the power of drama to support student growth in language learning is deemed to be especially pertinent to the grounding rationale for my research project. I turn now to those voices

who assert drama's power to positively influence children's oral and written language growth.

3.2 Educational drama and oral and written language learning

My own location within the academy allows me to rationalize the inclusion of educational drama in the English language arts from a varied theoretical and research base. School-based educators, on the other hand, must rationalize their instructional practice from the base of government approved curricula. Since this research project is primarily located in the context of classroom instructional practice, connections must be established between approved curriculum frameworks and the theoretical and research base of educational drama pedagogy.

The Common Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts, Kindergarten to Grade 12 (1996) represents the collaborative enterprise of educators from four western Canadian provinces and two territories. This document will provide the philosophical basis for English language arts instruction in Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta, British Columbia, the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. As such, it represents the grounding framework and justification for English language arts instructional practices in western Canada. The Framework is organized according to five General Student Learning Outcomes and specifies that students will speak, listen, read, write, view and represent in order to realize these outcomes (p.4). The following discussion identifies those General Outcomes which may be most effectively realized through drama experience and then establishes connections between these Outcomes and the claims made by educational drama theoreticians and researchers.

General Outcome #1 states that students will speak, listen, read, write, view and represent to **explore thoughts, ideas, feelings and experiences** (p.8). This Outcome subsumes learning objectives which require students to: a) share personal experiences with others, b) use a variety of language forms, c) experiment with language,

d) seek each other's viewpoints and insights, e) make connections between new experiences and prior knowledge, f) extend their ways of knowing the world (pp.14-16).

Booth (1987) suggests that classroom drama encourages students to use a wide variety of language forms and functions including expressive, interactive and informational language (p.18). Morgan and Saxton (1988) assert that drama is the most effective means through which students can use these three functions in a balanced negotiation of meaning (p.40). Tarlington and Verriour (1991) believe "perhaps the most positive aspect of role drama is that students are compelled to use language in a variety of ways" (p.12). That drama encourages students to use a variety of language forms and experiment with many functions of language is clearly supported by the theoretical base of educational drama pedagogy.

Students will also be expected to make connections between new experiences and prior knowledge and extend their ways of knowing the world, other objectives which may be realized through drama work:

> The key to its power lies in the unusual degree of awareness it provokes and the connections it can make between what the participant knows (emotionally and intellectually) and the body of knowledge or skills to be acquired.
> (Bolton, 1986, p.229)

Many educational drama theoreticians agree with Bolton that drama affords students explicit opportunities to make connections between their past experiences, feelings and the imagined realities of story and dramatic context (Wagner, 1979; Heathcote & Herbert, 1985; Booth 1987, 1994; Radford, 1988; Courtney, 1989; Neelands, 1990; Tarlington & Verriour, 1991; O'Neill, 1995). Students do not make these connections in isolation since drama is, by its very nature, a collaborative enterprise involving negotiation. Therefore students will have to seek each other's viewpoints and insights in order to make drama happen. It is clear that General Outcome #1 may be well realized through providing students with a variety of educational drama experiences.

General Outcome #2 of the Common Curriculum Framework (1996) states that students will speak, listen, read, write, view and represent to **comprehend and respond**

personally and critically to literary and media texts (p.18) This outcome will be realized through affording students opportunities to a) use strategies and cues, b) understand forms and techniques, and c) respond to texts. Drama's power to mediate students' response to text is perhaps its greatest contribution to realizing the aim expressed in this General Outcome.

Radford (1988) identifies four ways in which drama experiences can elaborate students' response to literary texts: a) validation of literary characters' differing viewpoints, b) deepening engagement through a system of multiple signs (i.e. speech, gesture, movement, etc.), c) drama's operation at a variable pace (i.e. the flexibility of drama time), and d) drama promotes reflection on events within the text (p.61). According to Heathcote, (Wagner, 1979) drama promotes a high level of reflection because "through the process of identifying [with characters] readers give life to texts; in this sense reading is akin to role playing in drama" (p.186). She goes on to state that "A reader who has discovered what words on a page are actually for -- distilled human experience -- has cracked the code forever" (p.187). Drama experiences are credited with motivating students to think more deeply about the "distilled human experiences" encapsulated in literary texts. This early description of the power of drama to influence students' engagement with literature is echoed more recently by a number of drama theoreticians and researchers (Ross, 1993; Jardine, 1993; Flynn & Carr, 1994; O'Neill, 1995). Connections to Rosenblatt's (1978, 1982) transactional reader response theory may also be made since drama experience contributes new experiences to the reader side of the transactional equation (Ross, 1993; Lang, 1997).

Booth (1994) suggests that literary text and improvisational drama can operate in a reflexive relationship with each other: "Text can be the starting point for improvisation and improvisation may lead to a closer study and deeper understanding of the original text" (p.126). In Booth's **story drama** model, drama episodes may precede, intercede and proceed from students' engagement with the text. He emphasizes that the interaction

between drama and text should not consist only of re-enactment of an existing story line since the power of drama to mediate student response goes beyond the translation of literary narrative into dramatic form: "The true relationship of reading and drama is the development of perception and of experience. The aim is that students fully comprehend what they read or hear so that they can modify and revalue their own ideas and expand their repertoire of feeling, tolerance and understanding" (Booth, 1987, p.47).

Several educational drama theoreticians and researchers have argued convincingly that drama experience positively affects children's ability to express themselves through written as well as oral language (Tarlington, 1985; Booth 1987, 1994; Ross, 1993; Neelands, Booth & Ziegler, 1993; Robbie, 1995). Since General Outcome #4 states that children will speak, listen, read, write, view and represent to **enhance the clarity and artistry of communication**, drama's power to help students achieve clarity and artistry in their written work, as well as their oral language work, further supports the inclusion of educational drama in the English language arts. Drama may be most effective in helping children to a) generate and focus on forms and ideas and b) present and share their work with others (Common Curriculum Framework, 1996, p.46).

Tarlington (1985), in describing a drama sequence she developed around the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin, suggests: "dramatic context can provide a purpose for writing. When writing is integrated with the drama learning process children can reflect on a problem by expressing their thoughts and feelings in different forms ranging from the personal and private (eg. the diary) to the more formal and public (eg. the business letter)" (p.204). The positive influence of drama work on students' attitudes towards writing is supported by the research findings of Neelands, Booth and Ziegler (1993) who discovered a small but significant increase in students' positive attitudes to writing over the course of four month's drama work with adolescents in Grades 8, 10 and 12 (p.21). These researchers emphasize how drama helped students to generate and focus on forms and ideas for their writing: "By working through practical and concrete activity the students had

the chance to make better sense of the writing process and its abstract nature. The drama provided a pathway between raw experience, data and the written word -- raw experience which could be worked on until it became usable as the basis for written language" (p.26).

Booth (1994) suggests drama's power to influence students' abilities to construct meaningful and purposeful written text is directly related to the motivating power of drama work: "The concrete contextual framework provided by dramatic situations can both encourage and enable students to compose and transcribe for authentic reasons" (p.124). Robbie (1995) agrees and adds that drama work can positively affect specific aspects of students' written composition: "Not only the tone and register, but the choice of vocabulary and sentence structure have been chosen carefully for both meaning and effect ...The dedication and involvement of the student are evidenced in more adventurous use of language and attention to detail" (p.112).

Drama's power to support and enhance oral language development and to extend students' spoken vocabulary through the use of multiple language registers is a claim made consistently and frequently throughout the educational drama literature (O'Neill & Lambert, 1982, O'Neill 1982, 1995; Neelands 1984, 1990; Bolton, 1986; Wagner, 1988; Courtney, 1989; Booth 1985,1987,1994; Morgan & Saxton, 1987). The relationship between one's ability to use sophisticated vocabulary within multiple language registers and one's ability to effectively share and present information and ideas orally is self-evident.

Artistic expression is, in many ways, a form of celebrating the human spirit (Nachmanovitch, 1990). When children celebrate their ideas and insights through the artistic form of drama, they use many symbol systems (language, gesture, movement and sometime visual art and media) to represent and express their voices. The power of drama to help children realize General Outcome #5 -- speak, listen, read, write, view and represent to **celebrate and to build community** -- is perhaps the most unique contribution educational drama can make to help educators meet the expectations of the Common Curriculum Framework for English language arts. The experience of drama

allows children to "walk a mile in someone else's moccasins" and opens up the broad range of human experience for consideration and reflection. Drama demands and builds co-operation and the group process skills, an expectation subsumed within this General Outcome (p.64).

Because drama is explicitly concerned with encouraging children to make connections between their own experience and the experience of the characters whose roles they assume, it contributes directly to an appreciation of diversity and a respect for other points of view and opinion. One of the most exciting new directions in drama work in the 1990's is the use of drama to build participants' awareness of cultural and social issues (Errington, 1993; Moon, 1993; Campbell, 1994; Norris 1994, 1995; Boal, 1995). The work with collective creation and popular theatre which is being undertaken by these researchers is mainly with students who are in secondary or post-secondary settings but there may be application of the principles of collective creation with younger students as well, particularly within the context of Social Studies. Certainly, an age-appropriate application of the principles of collective creation in the elementary school could contribute significantly to the realization of General Outcome #5. The need to celebrate and build community is especially important to all students of all ages as we move into the technologically demanding and sometimes frightening society of the next millennium. This outcome may be the most important -- as well as the most difficult to evaluate -- outcome within the Common Curriculum Framework. I would suggest that it may be very hard to achieve celebration and community building without the support provided by educational drama work in the elementary English language arts classroom.

Conclusion

As a wise playwright observes, records, reflects and researches the human dimensions of character and plot before developing the work that expresses his or her vision or theme, so must a researcher prepare the stage and lay the groundwork that

supports a vision for research. This chapter has documented my process of finding the script for this research project.

I summarized the experiences in my own background as a classroom teacher, curriculum developer, university lecturer and student teaching supervisor which created the context for my identification of the research problem and purpose. My own personal beliefs about the importance of drama work in the English language arts and my concerns about the status of drama in elementary classrooms were then directly grounded in research and theory. The explication of this theoretical framework included discussion of a) survey research on the status of drama in schools b) qualitative research exploring ways that teachers may be supported to use drama in their classrooms c) the relationship of learning and intelligence theory to claims made for educational drama and d) theoretical support for including educational drama structures in the English language arts. The Common Curriculum Framework for English Language Arts (1996) was used to contain and organize a discussion of research and theory relating oral and written language development to educational drama.

But a play without a cast of players is only words on a page. The dynamic medium of theatre requires the voices, bodies and minds of human actors to transform the playwright's vision into that crystallization of the human struggle which will move audiences to tears and to laughter. The next chapter will document my process of "setting the stage" or preparing to cast the players for this research project and will ground this experience in a review of theory and research related to school-university partnerships, change theory related to teacher professionalization and collaborative action research.

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CHAPTER TWO

SETTING THE STAGE

Transforming from Singular Vision to Collective Creation

The selection of an appropriate research design is crucial to the success of any research study. Because I was especially concerned with locating those places where the theoretical underpinnings of educational process drama pedagogy met the realities of English language arts instructional practice, I needed a design that would afford opportunities for *praxis* which Freire (1970) describes as " theory and practice; it is reflection and action" (p.106). An exploration of several qualitative research methodologies revealed collaborative action research to be the structure most appropriate to my needs.

My selection of a collaborative action design as the most appropriate container for my research initiated the transformation of the "playscript" from singular vision to collective creation. Up to this point, my vision of how educational drama could be integrated into English language arts had been a self-centered vision informed only by my own instructional practice and understanding of educational drama theory and research. In theatre terms, I was director/playwright/producer of the playscript that would be my research project.

This self-centered perspective was necessarily very short-lived. The choice of a collaborative action research design demanded a shift in my own perspective from self at the centre to a place where I would be "centered-in-self" in that my own experience would continue to influence and shape the study but would expand to include the visions of others as well. Norris (1995) describes the difference between these two perspectives in the collective creation of a playscript: "...we needed each other to go beyond our own skins, beyond our own point of view. In our collective performances, we bring our own perspectives forward but we make them problematic. In this way we go beyond self-indulgence as we continually question ourselves" (p.296). Thus the playscript becomes the

negotiated creation of the group and ownership is shared. A singular vision may therefore inform but cannot contain a collective creation.

Because my vision had developed over a period of many years, I was firmly grounded in a particular philosophical viewpoint or system of beliefs. I realized that creating spaces where my beliefs could be made problematic by others would be challenging for me on personal and professional levels. In order to prepare for this challenge, it was necessary for me to explore the benefits and potential problems others had identified in collaborative research work. Since I was located in the academy and was choosing to work with school-based teachers, I decided that school-university partnership theory and research might inform my understanding and offer insights that would sensitize me to the needs of teacher participants and lessen potential problems. I also recognized that the construct of *praxis* contains within its very definition the reality of change at personal and professional levels. For this reason, I recognized the importance of exploring change theory as it related to teachers in schools. This chapter will discuss the research and theory underpinning school-university partnerships and teachers' response to change and connect this discussion with collaborative action research perspectives.

In order to ground this discussion in a societal context, it is necessary to identify the impetus behind school-university partnership research as one path to effecting change in schools. We hear, from media sources, politicians, business people, parents and many others as well as from experts and theoreticians in the field of education, the message that schools need to change in order to meet the needs of today's students. Although these many different voices do not agree on <u>how</u> to change schools or what the changed school would look like, the belief that schools should change in some way is held by a large percentage of the North American population. Since a discussion of the social and educational issues underlying the need for schools to change is tangential to my focus, I will limit my brief discussion to key voices in the field of education who advocate for school change or reform to achieve democratic and humanistic goals. Fullan (1991)

identifies these goals as directed towards restructuring schools rather than intensifying existing top-down power structures through standardized achievement testing, teacher evaluation, and mandated textbooks (p.7). The restructurist philosophy is consistent with and supportive of the goals and purposes of this research project.

Changing Schools

Postman (1995), one strong voice for school reform, expresses the concern that the influential or decision making players in today's schools have become preoccupied with consumerism, economic utility and technology to the detriment of democratic ideals and values. He calls for a return to "moral guidance, a sense of continuity, explanations of the past, clarity to the present, hope for the future" (61-62). Postman's focus on humanistic and democratic goals for education is closely aligned with the social activism of critical theorists.

Critical theorists (including Freire, 1970; McLaren, 1989; Apple, 1993) argue strongly for schools that empower teachers and students to think and speak out as active agents for social change and reform. Greene (1993) stresses the importance of the arts in achieving these goals:

> It is because I believe that encounters with arts can awaken us to alternative possibilities of existing, of being human, of relating to others, of *being* other, that I argue for their centrality in the curriculum (p.214).

Creating schools that support the centrality of the arts in the curriculum requires, however, that priorities shift and that students' artistic expressions or representations be as highly valued, if not more so, than their scores on standardized achievement tests. Goodlad (1997) cautions that the recent emphasis on standardized testing dilutes the most fundamental purposes of education for children:

> This narrowing of school role reinforces rote learning and reduces teaching to the mechanics of instruction. The concept of nurturing the self in a richly layered context of teaching and learning languishes and frequently is negated (p.128).

Goodlad's current commentary on school role reinforces the concerns expressed by educational leaders in the 1980's. Bruner (1986) warned "The language of education is the

language of culture creating, not of knowledge consuming or knowledge acquisition alone" (p.133). McLaren (1989) emphasized the importance of giving student experience priority over knowledge acquisition: "It is crucial, therefore, that educators address the question of how the social world is experienced, mediated, and produced by students. Failure in this will not only prevent teachers from tapping into the drives, emotions and interests that give students their own unique voice, but will also make it difficult to provide the momentum for learning itself" (p.227). Although these represent only a few of the voices advocating for the restructuring of schools according to democratic and emancipatory principles, they are key and influential voices in the field of education. By identifying some of the key concerns of restructurist reformers, these voices serve to locate and explain one force behind the school-university partnership movement.

School-University Partnerships

Some partnership relationships between educators located in the university community and school-based educators involve formally funded and system-wide networks established to effect substantive change in a wide geographic area (Joyce & Showers, 1983; Lieberman & Miller, 1984; Lieberman, 1992; Knight, Wiseman & Smith, 1992; Goodlad, 1994; Catelli, 1995; Christensen, Epanchin, Harris, Rosselli, Smith & Stoddard 1996; Lieberman & Grolnick, 1996). Partnership research also extends to embrace small volunteer relationships between one or two teachers and one university-based researcher established to explore single questions of instructional practice (Lieberman, 1986; Calhoun, 1993; Raywid, 1993; Macaul; Blount & Phelps, 1994; Johnson, Hughes & Mincks, 1994; Hollingsworth, 1994). The structuring of participant roles within school-university partnership groups varies considerably as well, in relation to the size of the group, to the philosophy of education held by participants and initiators of the project and to matters of funding and governance.

Some partnerships are structured around specifically defined roles for the various participants in the project. These roles may include university educator as coach (Joyce &

Showers, 1995), as service provider (Macaul, Blount & Phelps, 1994), as critical friend (Costa & Kallick, 1993) or as resource provider and demonstration teacher (Raywid, 1993). Teacher collaborators may be expected to develop their own research questions and collect their own data (Feldman, 1993) or to participate in research action while leaving research questions and data collection to the university researcher (Kelly, 1985; Tom, 1996).

The partnership structure most pertinent to my research revolves around a partnership model defined by purpose rather than by role. The construct of critical inquiry as a governing purpose in school-university partnership research has been explicated in various ways by different researchers. Joyce and Showers (1995) describe critical inquiry as a method involving continuous data collection, analysis and interpretation (p. xv). Catelli (1995) expands this definition to include role and purpose as well as method:

> As a relatively new term, collaborative inquiry refers to the combined efforts of teachers, researchers, and teacher educators to engage in a systematic and "critically" oriented process of inquiry, in order to understand and improve some commonly agreed-upon dimensions of educational practice (p.27)

The explanation of critical inquiry posited by Sirotnik (1988) provides a most detailed and thorough description of this construct. He describes it as "a process of self-study -- of generating and acting upon knowledge, in context, by and for the people who use it" (p.169). He suggests that the qualifier "critical" entails systematic discourse wherein a) values, beliefs, interests and ideologies are made explicit b) the need for further information is generated and c) all actions taken are critically reviewed and may then be retaken (p.170). Critical inquiry is a method used frequently in many forms of collaborative action research.

Goodlad (1988) suggests that the differences between the cultures of the university and the school make it imperative that participants from both communities have a definite understanding of what partnership research can offer them before embarking on a process of shared critical inquiry. He refers to the type of relationship required for successful school-university partnership research as a kind of symbiosis where "unlike organisms are

joined in mutually beneficial relationships" (p.14) He suggests that there must be a) dissimilarity of purpose b) mutual satisfaction of self-interest and c) sufficient selflessness on the part of all participants to ensure that all will achieve satisfaction (p.14). Knight et al (1992) suggest that Goodman's concept of "selflessness" is particularly difficult to achieve since the differences between the two cultures of school and university may create a climate where the interests of one are in direct competition with the other (p.270).

Schlechty and Whitford (1988) argue that an organic rather than a symbiotic principle should govern educators involved in school-university partnership research. They suggest that this principle may best be achieved when the common good and common interests of both teachers and university educators are addressed through projects related to the professionalization of teaching (p.193). They add that a major barrier in forging successful partnerships is the difficulty of realizing praxis because "theory tends to be generated in a culture where it does not apply (the university) and efforts to apply theory are undertaken in cultures where few theoreticians practice (the public schools)" (p.197).

The differences between the cultures of university and school create other challenges that must be considered by teachers and university researchers who intend to embark on a collaborative research venture. Clark (1988) suggests that some university educators may have become so insular and focused on the institutional expectations of academe, that they have lost sight of the basic purposes of educational research:

> At times it almost seems as if they believe that they can learn more about schools and schooling by reading what one of their peers has written about schools than by studying the schools themselves (p.55).

There are, according to Eisner (1988), a growing number of educational researchers from the university who do not fit Clark's portrait of the insular academic:

> American educational researchers are beginning to go back to schools, not to conduct commando raids, but to work with teachers as colleagues in a common quest and through such collaboration to rediscover the qualities, the complexities, and the richness of life in classrooms (p.19).

Even if university researchers are open to learning from teachers, there are other concerns that must be addressed in order to insure successful school-university partnerships. Knight

et al (1992) suggest that the greater value given to reflection and analysis in the university contrasts with the school culture which "values action and experience-based knowledge that can immediately be applied to local teaching and learning concerns" (p.269). It is very important that participants from both cultures recognize this basic difference in values and make allowances for it if the partnership is to be successful (Knight et al, 1992; Christensen et al, 1996; Goodlad, 1994). Tom (1996) reminds university researchers that teachers do not have the same time or mandate to engage in the kind of reflection and analysis that is rewarded in the university community and that research projects add another responsibility to their busy days (p.354).

Even though the differences between school and university cultures may create problems, those same differences can also be beneficial to participants from both schools and universities when participants are open to learning about each other's values (Knight et al, 1992). One university researcher involved in a partnership with two teachers reflected: "it contributed to my professional growth because it required me to test my knowledge in the real life situations of the classrooms" (Johnson et al, 1994). The benefits of difference between school and university cultures for school-university partnership research is described by Lieberman (1988)

> Somehow the sustained involvement of those who had the time for research, reflection and significant discussion with those who worked actively, but had little or no time to think about their work, was incredibly powerful (p.70).

Another issue that is identified as posing a challenge in school-university partnership research revolves around questions of status and authority. University personnel are often perceived by teachers to have more authority to make research decisions based on their perceived higher status within the academy (Knight et al, 1992; Feldman, 1993; Tom, 1996). Because of these teacher perceptions, it is essential that university personnel take the greatest responsibility for ensuring parity among collaborating participants (Goodlad, 1988; Knight et al, 1992; Tom; 1996). Lieberman and Grolnick (1996) recommend that university personnel consciously encourage school-based educators

to take leadership roles from the beginning stages of the project. They suggest that the efforts of university-based educators to resist assuming extra authority within the school-university partnership will ensure a beneficial learning experience for all concerned: "learning to collaborate and work with people who have different orientations to building knowledge is what many members find to be one of the most powerful experiences" (p35).

Feldman (1993) highlights an additional concern related to teacher well-being. He states that teachers may feel threatened by the implied scrutiny of their work that occurs when the university researcher is gathering data in the classroom. It is especially important that school-based educators perceive neither implicit nor explicit evaluation of their performance by university personnel since traditional evaluation can destroy the trust so necessary to effective collaboration (Knight et al, 1992; Goodlad, 1988; Sirotnik, 1988). Establishing and maintaining trust is again, largely the responsibility of the university researcher, according to Christensen et al (1996). They found that some university faculty members within their study spent a great deal of time and energy working to develop feelings of equity and parity with school-based educators. They conclude that a prime concern of university researchers working collaboratively with school-based educators should be to develop "trust, respect and attachment among the individuals involved"(p.177).

It is especially important to some teachers and also to university personnel that the university researcher be directly involved in the classroom. One teacher explains the reasons why:

> I highly recommend the active and regular involvement of the university collaborator in the classroom. When other teachers and parents see collaboration taking place naturally, they have more confidence in the project and its results.
> (Johnson et al, 1994, p.439)

The university researcher in this partnership agrees but adds that final decisions "whether they be strategies to use, lessons to present or data to be collected -- must rest with the teachers" (p.439). Other school-university partnership researchers and theoreticians agree that the university researcher's involvement in the classroom is an important source of

support for the teacher and contributes to the university researcher's understanding of how the practical context of schooling meets the theoretical context of research (Clark, 1988; Fullan, 1991; Feldman, 1993; Hollingsworth, 1994; Goodlad, 1994; Myers, 1995).

One very crucial difference between school and university cultures that seems to influence the success of school-university partnerships is the university researcher's sensitivity to issues of time as experienced by school-based educators. Teachers identify the limited amounts of time available for the reflection and discussion that is highly valued by qualitative researchers as one of the main problems in school-university partnership research (Little, 1987; Raywid, 1993; Johnson et al, 1994; Joyce & Showers, 1995; Christensen et al, 1996; Tom, 1996). Christensen et al (1996) suggest that time may be viewed from different dimensions as it relates to the school-university partnership:

> The first dimension is the expenditure of individual time that is needed to begin and maintain a partnership on a day-to-day, week-to-week basis. The second dimension involves the time it takes for a strong partnership to develop over months or years (p.172).

Little (1987) expresses the belief that lack of time is one of the greatest barriers to teachers forming the collegial and mutually supportive professional relationships which would allow them to tackle educational problems and issues in a collaborative way. Too little time for planning, discussion, professional reading and reflection may be, according to many researchers, one of the biggest barriers to achieving the professionalization of teaching (Goodlad 1988, 1997; Raywid, 1993; Joyce & Showers, 1995). Goodlad (1997) warns policy makers and leaders in education about another issue of time that may have great impact on the future of schooling in North America:

> The speed of travel down the information highway leaves no time to see the malaise behind the bushes by the roadside and to ponder where we might be headed (p.75).

Connected to the issue of time is the issue of funding for school-university partnership research. King and Lonnequist (1994) suggest that successful collaborations between teachers and university researchers should enable teachers to enjoy some of the incentives that are frequently available only to university personnel, administrators and

consultants such as visiting other schools, attending and presenting at conferences and sharing results with others. Osborne and Shipley (1995), reporting on a school-university partnership where teachers were paid for their participation and provided with release time, suggest that this professional and financial support increases the school system's professional resource base and extends the possibility of successful peer coaching opportunities within the school system (p.15.) Underfunding of collaborative research -- whether among school-based educators or teachers and university personnel -- is identified by a variety of sources as a serious barrier to positive change and teacher professionalization (Lieberman & Miller, 1984; Fullan, 1991; Joyce & Showers, 1995; Lieberman & Grolnick, 1996; Tom, 1996).

Goodlad (1994) encapsulates an issue that overlaps many of the specific concerns already identified when he suggests "the greatest danger to solid, lasting collaboration of university and school personnel in partner schools is *imageology* - the transformation of both reality and ideology into various images of them" (p.100). He explains that some university personnel have images of schools that are two-dimensional and ungrounded in direct experience and that teachers often view the theoretical "world" of the university with suspicion because they perceive educational theories to be impractical in the school context. Although the problem of imageology may challenge participants in school-university partnership research, this type of research may be the best possible way to replace the two-dimensional images held in both communities with an expanded understanding and appreciation of the realities and demands of both cultures -- the reflective and theory oriented academy and the action-oriented and practical application-oriented school.

Those teachers and university personnel who are willing to confront the potential challenges and become sensitive to each other's issues and concerns are likely to secure a variety of personal and professional benefits from their participation in school-university partnership research. The opportunity to achieve praxis through building conceptual knowledge which is illuminated by theory but grounded in the practical world of classroom

application is one of the most important benefits for both school-based educators and university personnel (Schlechty & Whitford, 1988; Lieberman, 1992; Macaul et al, 1994; Johnson et al, 1994; Catelli, 1995; Lieberman & Grolnick, 1996). Through joint problem-solving and knowledge-building, teachers and university personnel who work together closely in school-university partnerships frequently develop a strong sense of community and shared purpose (Lieberman, 1986; Hord, 1986; Calhoun, 1993; Macaul et al, 1994; Johnson et al, 1994).

Specific benefits identified by school-based teachers who have participated in school-university partnerships include the support to take risks and experiment with new instructional practices (Lieberman, 1992; Macaul et al, 1994, Johnson, 1994; Christensen et al, 1996), the opportunity for growth-enhancing dialogue about instructional practice with educators who hold different perspectives (Sirotnik, 1988; Macaul et al, 1994; Johnson et al, 1994; Christensen et al, 1996), and an impetus to creativity created by bouncing ideas around with interested colleagues (Lieberman, 1986; Macaul et al, 1994; Johnson et al, 1994). Lieberman and Miller (1984) also suggest that teachers' self-esteem is developed through positive interactions with school and university colleagues (p.15).

Joyce and Showers (1995) assert that the ultimate beneficiaries of collaborative research between teachers and university personnel must be the students in the classroom. They suggest:

> Students respond right away to changes in instruction and begin to accelerate their rates of learning -- provided that the educational environment is designed to do just that -- teach the students to learn more effectively (p.59).

University researchers express satisfaction with experiences of school-university partnership research that go beyond publications, research grants and the other extrinsic advantages of doing research within the academy. Carole Johnson (Johnson et al, 1994) summarizes the intrinsic rewards that are available to university personnel:

> The sharing of problems, concerns and alternative strategies was valuable for me also. I learned from the good ideas and insights which came from Mary and Rena. My high regard for teachers was reinforced through their willingness to risk, to change, to share problems and successes not only with each other but with me. In

> addition, it contributed to my professional growth because it required me to test my knowledge in the real life situations of the classrooms (p.438).

School-university partnerships have demonstrated success when all participants are aware of and sensitive to the challenges and demands of doing this type of research. It is essential to remember, however, that the driving purpose behind this type of research is to change schools and schools are changed when teachers change. The next section will discuss considerations related to structuring for change and the effects of change on teachers in the classroom.

Changing teachers, changing schools

Fullan (1991) states that educators and policy makers who promote pedagogical innovation must be fully aware of how change occurs for teachers at the classroom level. Teachers must perceive a real need for the proposed change that is strong enough to counterbalance forces such as fear, lack of time, isolation and perceived invalidation of previous practice, as all of these forces work against change (33-36). He emphasizes that change and the introduction of innovations is a long and complex process with at least three major phases: initiation, implementation and continuation (47-48). According to Fullan, teachers must have "one-on-one and group opportunities to receive and give help and more simply to converse about the meaning of change" (p.132). He also states that real change (as opposed to false clarity where teachers think they're implementing an innovation but haven't had time or opportunity to reflect on the rationale for that innovation) occurs most readily when teachers can plan in small, collaborative groups where individual voices are respected and heard. Innovations imposed by administration and central authorities are frequently resisted by teachers.

Joyce and Showers (1995) also emphasize the value of small groups of teachers working together to effect change:

> Teachers learn from each other in the process of planning instruction, developing the materials to support it, watching each other work with students and thinking together about the impact of their behavior on the learning of students (p.125).

They suggest that teachers must have adequate training in the proposed innovation, opportunities for coaching and peer support and sufficient time and administrative support to enable them to work towards professional growth as effective innovators.

Lieberman and Miller (1984) foreshadow the recommendations of these change theorists when they state;

> Discussion of new instructional strategies ... must be mated with discussions of how best to engage teachers in dialogue about their own teaching, how to find ways for teachers to have a greater sense of their own professionalism, their own sense of excitement as teachers (p.9).

Connelly and Clandinin (1988) suggest that when teachers engage in dialogue with each other about professional and personal concerns related to teaching, they develop a strong sense of their own professionalism. They suggest that teachers who have the opportunity to reflect on practice with colleagues come to value their own personal practical knowledge as valid classroom curriculum. Teachers are thus empowered to take ownership of an innovation and adapt it to their own particular context. Teachers who recognize their own power to take ownership of materials and teaching strategies are doing more than implementing the policy decisions and curricula created by government departments of education, textbook companies and school system central offices. These authors suggest that "inquiry" is a more appropriate and specific construct than "implementation" to describe how empowered teachers approach change and innovation:

> In implementation, teachers are told, perhaps even exhorted, to learn and act on what is intended, whereas in inquiry teachers work out for themselves, under guidance, the meaning of the text... The other half is reading those materials from a personal point of view. The questions one continually asks are "what do these materials mean for my curriculum situation?" and "what can I do with this material?" (p.151).

Creating a sense of personal ownership of ideas and strategies seems especially important in supporting teachers to innovate and change their instructional practice in the classroom context. Hollingsworth (1994) identifies ways in which the support of colleagues within a collaborative group is superior to the strategies for school change often provided by school system administrators and government departments of education:

> Unlike most staff development or inservice programs, our collaborative research allowed Leslie to frame her particular problem, ask for help with specific features of the new approach she did not understand, watch me model the approach with her children, get specific feedback about her teaching from Karen and others, and then modify the program so that she felt comfortable with it (p.117).

Leslie's experience of making the innovation her own within the supportive context of a group is echoed by Mary in a different collaborative research context (Johnson et al, 1994):

> An important benefit to me personally was the sense of security the collaboration brought to my willingness to risk trying a new teaching style. This led to my growth as a teacher and professional (p.437).

Since the collaborative group involves the teacher as a full participant in creating and working for classroom change rather than as a passive consumer of "lessons from the experts", the opportunities for personal ownership of the change process are intensified.

The collaborative experience alone, important as it is, may not provide enough support to help teachers change their instructional practice to accommodate new teaching strategies over the long term. Hintz (1993) explored nine elementary school teachers' attitudes towards implementing a cooperative-operative learning approach in their classroom programs. Since cooperative-operative learning requires students to work in small groups and exchange ideas in order to complete tasks and solve problems, it includes many of the structuring and facilitation skills required of teachers who use process drama. Hintz suggests that positive attitudes towards an innovation are not enough to ensure that teachers will integrate an innovational approach over the long term. Teachers require support from their principal and their teaching colleagues in the form of some type of recognition or appreciation (p.4). Also, teachers must feel the innovation is compatible with their classroom management philosophy and current teaching style or practice (p.5). Hintz emphasizes that teachers who receive collegial support from peers -- especially other teachers based in other educational institutions or schools -- will be more likely to continue working with an innovation past the initiatory stages (p.7). Such findings confirm the importance to a teacher of collaboration and collegial support from fellow educators within and without the doors of that teacher's classroom.

Kennedy and Kennedy (1996) provide a more in-depth psychological perspective regarding how teacher attitudes affect their abilities to innovate and change instructional practices. They state that positive attitudes towards a change are not enough to ensure teacher action for change. They suggest:

> Both subjective norms (lack of societal disapproval) and perceived behavioral control (too many practical obstacles) are powerful enough to override any positive attitude individuals may have towards the desired behavior (p.358)

They conclude that it is as important for respected and powerful groups (administration, university, etc.) to provide teachers with extensive support and encouragement to innovate as it is to train teachers in any particular innovation. Teachers must feel supported and appreciated in order to undertake the challenges and risks that change entails.

The research on teachers and change indicates that a key ingredient required to ensure successful innovations in classroom instructional practice is to include a supportive and collegial "cheering section" for the teacher undertaking to make that change. The creation of that "cheering section" may best be achieved within the collaborative action research paradigm.

Collaborative Action Research

Although the next chapter will include specific references to collaborative action research literature as these relate to my unfolding research design, it is necessary to include a brief overview of the historical development of action research as a respected method of qualitative inquiry in order to rationalize this methodology as the most appropriate choice for school-university partnership research geared towards encouraging teachers to change and innovate. This overview will also serve to contextualize my research design and methodology in currently accepted action research practices and perspectives.

Kurt Lewin, the social psychologist who devised the field theory of concepts in the 1940's, is credited as being the originator of action research (Adelman, 1993). Lewin believed that the best way to solve problems and effect change in organizations was to involve the people who were responsible for making the change in the decision making

process (p.9). He classified four types of action research: a) diagnostic action research designed to produce a needed plan of action b) participant action research in which it is assumed that the residents of the affected community who were to help effect a cure must be involved in the research process c) empirical action research -- a matter of record keeping and accumulating experiences in day-to-day work and d) experimental action research -- the controlled study of the relative effectiveness of various techniques in nearly identical social situations (13-14). Lewin, as a function of his historical context, was concerned with locating action research within the scientific experimental research paradigm. Lewin (1952) suggests that group decision (his term for collaborative group decision making) can achieve the following outcomes: a) a high degree of involvement for those people who put decisions into practice, b) motivation for participants to carry through with decisions and c) individual identification with group decisions (464-465). Although Lewin was in contact with John Dewey and was familiar with Dewey's progressive movement, he was not directly involved in educational research (p.15).

Corey (1953) was the first to discuss the characteristics and goals of action research specifically within an educational setting. He suggested that educators would make better decisions and engage in more effective practices if they were able to conduct research as a basis for these decisions (p.6). Although Corey's action research lexicon bespeaks the influence of the experimental research paradigm (i.e. hypothesis, testing of hypothesis, evidence and generalization as steps in the process), he supported an approach to research which would allow teachers to identify and research their own practical problems. His belief that cooperative-operative groups could be an important vehicle for effecting reform and change, established the theoretical rationale which has been refined and extended by other action researchers over the ensuing decades.

The paucity of published action research studies in the late 1950's and 1960's resulted from the rising preeminence of quantitative experimental research as the paradigm of choice for educational researchers -- a reaction to the launching of Sputnik in 1957 (Carr

& Kemmis, 1986, p.16). Action research was concerned with addressing practical questions of classroom practice in the field rather than the laboratory and, as such, was difficult to quantify by statistical methods. With the shift of academic interest to qualitative research and naturalistic inquiry that has been occurring in the last two decades, action research is once again establishing itself as defensible research practice.

Carr and Kemmis (1986) developed a detailed and well-grounded theoretical framework which contributed significantly to securing a place for action research in the academy. They ground action research practice in the work of critical theorists, stating that educational research must concern itself with bridging the theory/practice division while working towards democratic and socially viable ideals. They determine that one important function of research is to help educators -- especially school-based educators -- achieve praxis which they define as "informed action which, by reflection on its character and consequences, reflexively changes the 'knowledge base' which informs it" (p.33). Carr and Kemmis establish five requirements for action research as an educational science: 1) the rejection of positivistic notions of truth in favour of a dialectical view of rationality 2) employment of teachers' interpretive categories as the basis for language frameworks, 3) the necessity of locating teacher understandings in a broader social and historical framework, 4) a linking of reflection to action in order to effect change and 5) the development of self-critical communities of action researchers who determine truth as it relates to practice (179-180).

The theoretical framework established by Carr and Kemmis was developed into a research model by Kemmis and McTaggert (1988). They describe the action research process as a spiral which 1) begins with reconnaissance or reflection on the educational situation in light of a thematic concern, 2) moves into planning or identifying strategically what is to be done, how it will be done and who will do it, 3) leads to enacting the plan and observing how it works through data collection and 4) moves to reflection or the process of analyzing, synthesizing, interpreting, explaining and drawing conclusions (7-

10). The reflection step will bring new concerns and questions to light so that the cycle may be repeated at a new level on the spiral. Any action research project may go through several cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting, depending on the needs of the group. They suggest that cycles of ten days to one month are likely to be the most rewarding for small groups of school-based educators (p.48).

Kemmis's and McTaggert's research model presupposed a high degree of collaboration and shared decision-making by members of the action research group. Elliott (1985) foreshadowed many of the recent concerns expressed in school-university partnership research when he suggested that the collaborative or cooperative-operative ethic would be hard to maintain when participants were drawn from the two cultures of the school and the university or from different positions in the school system hierarchy (i.e. teachers, consultants and administrators). He suggested that action research teams would have to resolve a) who defines the focus of the research, b) who defines the pedagogical aims of the project and c) how teachers' work would be represented in the final product of the research process. He recommended that teachers should be able to define specific problems within a mutually established pedagogical framework and to match theoretical input to problems as they emerged. He also insisted that teachers' voices should be acknowledge and represented in the final research product (259-260).

Kelly (1985) identified as problematic the assumption that all action research concerns must issue from the practical and immediate problems identified by teachers. She suggested an approach she termed "simultaneous action research" which would involve teachers in practical problem solving while allowing researchers to frame the overarching research concern or theme. She states:

> simultaneous-integrated action research starts by 'making' a social issue ... problematic for teachers. Once this is done the initiative passes to the teachers as they begin to examine and change their own practice (p.140).

Such a research perspective is appropriate, according to Kelly, when social issues have been identified as important by the research community but may not be of immediate

concern to teachers until they become involved in the research process. This approach contributes an important perspective to working with educational drama themes in an action research context since research indicates that many teachers consider drama important but low status (Kaaland-Wells, 1994; Hundert, 1996). Framing the study as focused on working with educational drama structures in the English language arts prior to involving teachers is in keeping with Kelly's suggestions.

Oja and Smulyan (1989) explored the action research process and its participants in light of adult development theory. They suggest that participants must be given the opportunity to negotiate research and group boundaries, pursue tangents, reach consensus and re-interpret tasks in the early stages of the research process (p.60). The outside or university researcher's role should, they suggest, include addressing the developmental needs and abilities of group members. Although their primary focus is on school staff dynamics, the importance of addressing the developmental needs of participants (including the researcher) is an important consideration for any collaborative project.

Current thought related to the contributions collaborative action research can make to the educational knowledge base is becoming more firmly situated within the postmodern paradigm. Carson and Sumara (1997) explain the implications of this situation:

> Action research knowledge is not considered apart from the historically, politically, culturally, and socially effected conditions of its own production. The knowledge that is produced through action research is always knowledge about one's self and one's relations to particular communities. In this sense, action research practices are deeply hermeneutic and postmodern practices, for not only do they acknowledge the importance of self and collective interpretation, but they deeply understand that these interpretations are always in a state of becoming and can never be fixed into predetermined and static categories (p. xviii).

Collaborative action research as a methodology has therefore been transformed over a period of the last fifty years from a structured approach located within the scientific or quantitative paradigm into a consciously declared postmodern research practice. This transformation in purpose carries with it implications for a university researcher with a singular vision and classroom teachers with a professional goal. Collaborative action research would not provide us with a detailed map to outline how we should work

together, negotiate the ramifications of change and find our way to the other side of our collaborative exploration of incorporating educational drama into English language arts instructional practice. This was a path we would have to find ourselves.

Conclusion

Before one undertakes a directorial debut in the world of the theatre, it is imperative that one apprentice with a seasoned director and consult with those who have directed, written or produced plays in the past. This chapter has documented suggestions, recommendations, warnings and reminders from experienced "directors, producers and playwrights" in the world of educational research. Experienced voices have thus informed my singular vision of what my research project would be. Through the process of talking to others and reading the literature related to school-university partnerships, change theory and collaborative action research principles and practices, I discovered how important it would be for me to let go of the director's chair, unfurl my fingers from the script and open up to the unknown possibilities of working with teachers who wanted to become proficient in using educational drama in their English language arts classrooms. The stage was set for a "collective creation" borne out of collaborative action research. The next chapter will detail the unfolding experience of this collective over a ten month period beginning in July of 1997 and concluding in April of 1998.

CHAPTER THREE

CASTING THE PLAYERS

Introduction

There is a moment of anticipation that ripples through an audience of theatre-goers when the house lights go down, chatter ceases and the actors enter the drama space of the empty stage for the first time. It is at that moment that the audience is invited to participate in the imagined reality of the play and, for them, it is a beginning. For the director, the production crew, and the actors, however, the moment of beginning occurs long before the audience becomes involved. In a traditional, scripted play, it may occur in a rehearsal studio during the first read-through of the playscript. This is the moment when the words on the page take form and substance in embodied representation.

For participants in collective creation, the play begins when players first come together as a group and begin to share their ideas and goals for the dramatic work. In collective creation, the moment of beginning is a tentative and open time when anything is possible. Norris (1995) explains that the establishment of trust is crucial to the beginning phases of collective work:

> ...the purpose of orientation is to help the participants to begin to trust one another. Once this starts, they are freer to express what they think and feel. It is my responsibility as teacher/director to provide the stimuli or triggers to help them recover personal memories and beliefs. When this occurs, and trust is present, personal meanings are explored, examined, debated and tested through dramatic activities. The individuals and the group become interested and engaged in the activities and a commitment to the project is achieved (p.297).

As I describe how this research project moved from singular vision to collective creation, I weave in moments of narrative and commentary to underline how trust was established among my collaborative partners and myself from the very beginning stages of our work together. Although a discussion of methodological considerations and data collection form the structural framework for this chapter, the moments of narrative serve to contextualize this discussion in relation to the subjective realities of the participants.

Selection of Participants

I started thinking about how I would locate those teachers to participate with me in this research in early 1997. I soon realized that interest alone would be insufficient for the purposes I was framing and refining. Garcia (1993) reports that for teachers to sustain an interest in using drama in the classroom, they require more exposure to educational drama pedagogy than is available in "one-shot" inservices (p.9) Wright (1985) emphasizes that it is not enough for teachers to learn *about* drama -- they must also experience it (p.206). I would need to find teachers who had some basic understandings of educational drama pedagogy or, even more desirable, teachers who had participated in drama themselves. I realized that finding teachers who were already established in classrooms and possessed the pre-requisite knowledge and experience would be a formidable task -- especially for someone who was a newcomer to the province and the city.

Fortunately, a solution to the problem presented itself in the form of a summer school class, "International Studies in Process Drama", which was offered through the Secondary Education Department, University of Alberta, in the summer of 1997. Since the class was being offered at the graduate as well as the undergraduate level and was being taught by Dr. Jonothan Neelands, a well-recognized authority in educational process drama pedagogy (Neelands 1984; 1990), I registered as a student in this class. I realized that I might find teachers who would be interested in participating in the research project among my summer session classmates.

I constructed a thirteen item questionnaire (see Appendix A) to collect base line data about students registered in the class in the hope that this information might help me locate and select participants for my research study. The questionnaire asked for information about respondents' current professional status (i.e. were they undergraduate students, graduate students, certified but non-classroom based teachers, classroom teachers or in some other category). Classroom teachers were asked to describe their fall (1997) teaching assignments. Questions 2 through 6 were directly related to the summer school class and

elicited information about respondents' past experience using drama as a teaching strategy. their reasons for registering in "International Studies in Process Drama", their expectations (personal and professional) of the summer school class and how they thought their experience of the class might benefit their students and change their teaching practice.

Questions 7 through 10 related to respondents' interest and willingness to participate in a research project which would involve them in integrating the process drama strategies they learned about in the summer school class into their classroom instructional programs in the fall. These questions were framed as follows:

Question #7: What benefits do you think you might experience from meeting regularly with a small group of teachers to support each other in incorporating drama into group members' classroom programs?

Question #8: What conditions would have to be met to make a drama support group a positive and energizing experience rather than one more obligation and demand on your time?

Question #9: Can you describe specific topics or questions that are of interest to you that a drama support group might address?

Question #10: Can you anticipate any challenges you might face in incorporating drama into your instructional repertoire? Please describe briefly.

Question #11 was designed to discover how respondents felt about revealing their developing practice of educational drama teaching strategies to peers through a) classroom visits b) videotapes of drama lessons and c) other strategies for self-assessment and peer group analysis. Although the opportunity for peer coaching did not present itself during the course of the research, this item was designed to find out if respondents would agree to teaching in front of their peers if the circumstances allowed this to happen. Question #12 asked teachers to consider where in their classroom programs they expected to incorporate drama strategies most frequently. Possible suggestions included in this item were a) drama as a subject in its own right. b) English language arts. c) Social Studies. and d) Other.

Question #13 was an open-ended invitation to respondents to include any further comments or questions about the proposed research project.

Twenty-eight questionnaires were distributed on the first day of the summer school class with the request that students complete them outside of class time and return them to me before or on the last day of class. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a consent form requesting respondents' permission to use the data from returned questionnaires for research purposes. Student anonymity was guaranteed. Nine of the twenty-eight questionnaires were returned to me by the end of the summer school course. Several students in the class explained to me that they had not completed the questionnaires because they were not going to be teaching in the fall and didn't think their responses would be helpful to me.

Four of the completed questionnaires came from full-time graduate students who were not returning to classroom teaching in the fall of 1997. Two were completed by Bachelor of Education graduates who were looking for teaching positions but had been unable to secure positions at the time they completed the questionnaire. One of these students did secure a teaching position eventually but I did not learn about this until October and by that time the collaboration was well underway. One completed questionnaire came from a college level drama instructor.

Two of the nine completed questionnaires, however, did come from full-time classroom teachers who expressed an interest in the project. Questions 7, 8 and 12 on the questionnaire were especially helpful in identifying the nature of their interest and willingness to participate. Since the issue of anonymity had not been discussed when the questionnaires were completed, I will identify my future collaborative partners as Respondent A and Respondent B in reporting their responses to the questionnaire. Questions, as asked on the questionnaire, are listed with the responses of each of the two teachers following each question. Where appropriate, comments related to how responses played out during the research project are included after the teachers' responses.

Question #7: What benefits do you think you might experience from meeting regularly with a small group of teachers to support each other in incorporating drama into group members' classrooms?

Respondent A: Support, encouragement, ideas

Respondent B: Get specific ideas with plans worked out or partially planned. Support of colleagues doing the same sorts of things.

Question # 8: What conditions would have to be met to make a drama support group a positive and energizing experience rather than one more obligation and demand on your time?

Respondent A: Tight time commitment (not open-ended for "another day")

Respondent B: A convenient time for meeting -- ideally during the work day rather than evenings. Failing that, during the day on weekends in a convivial place.

We failed to meet the conditions expressed by Respondent B during the course of the research project since all of our meetings took place on weekday evenings. Respondent A's condition was met since once all three of us had committed to a particular evening there were no occasions when anyone failed to attend the meeting.

Question #12: Where in your classroom program do you expect to incorporate drama strategies most frequently?

Respondent A: English language arts

Respondent B: Drama, English language arts, Ancient civilizations

When we did meet to discuss the location of drama within both teachers' classroom programs, Respondent B decided that she would focus on the English language arts alone for purposes of the research project. This was her decision and was not influenced by me in any way. I was pleased, though, that both teachers had signified a preference for working in the English language arts since my experiential background and knowledge base would enable me to support the teachers' work most effectively from this instructional stance.

I had asked all the respondents who were interested in finding out more about the research project to include their telephone numbers on the questionnaire. Respondent A recorded her phone number on the attached consent form. Respondent B gave me her phone number orally (I wrote it down) when she handed me her questionnaire. None of the other respondents included their phone numbers on the questionnaire although two of them included the comment "Good luck with your work" in item 13.

After the last summer session class with Dr. Neelands, almost all of the students, as well as Dr. Norris and Dr. Neelands, met at Earl's Restaurant which is kitty corner from the Faculty of Education building on the University of Alberta campus. We sat outside at sidewalk tables under umbrellas (it was very hot), sipped cool drinks, ate lunch and traded those "in-jokes" that are so characteristic of groups who have participated together in extended theatre or drama experiences. One of the younger undergraduate students had invited everyone to attend a party at her apartment. By about 3:30 pm, most of the undergraduate students and both instructors had left for the party (the former) and for work (the latter). The remaining group included six women -- self-identified as the "old bats" -- who had decided to finish the afternoon with iced coffees and a visit rather than attending the party. We talked about our children, our teaching, and our plans for the remainder of the summer. Both of my future collaborative partners were part of this group. It was the moment that marked the beginning of the rapport and friendship that would develop and deepen over the next nine months.

I phoned both women to schedule a meeting on August 12 of 1997 so that I could explain the research project in more detail and formally invite them to participate. I composed a three and a half page letter which summarized my professional background, explained my purposes and described how the research project might unfold during the school year. In this letter, I was determined to be clear about my own beliefs and my supportive stance towards teachers. An excerpt from this letter illustrates how I presented

my "singular vision" to both of my future partners from the very outset of the research project:

> My subjective stance is grounded in three strong beliefs. First of all, I believe it is unrealistic to expect classroom teachers to innovate and implement unconventional teaching strategies without providing them with professional support and adequate resources and training. Secondly, I believe that motivation and engagement are key factors in encouraging children to read, write, problem-solve, and communicate more effectively. Thirdly, I believe that educational drama structures can be utilized to motivate students and deepen their engagement with books, and to help them develop written and oral communications skills and problem-solving capabilities.
> (Correspondence, August 11, 1997)

My letter also included a possible time frame (October, 1997 to April, 1998), my expectations of them and what I thought I could offer to them as an outside university researcher. My statement of expectations included information about data collection, frequency of group meetings, student writing as a source of data and my request that they be "totally honest" with me about their problems and concerns. Two of the expectations -- that we meet every two or three weeks and that they keep weekly reflective journals -- were discarded during the course of the research project.

I attached a handout which described the basic principles and conduct of collaborative action research (Carson, Conners, Ripley and Smits, 1989) to my letter. Instead of mailing the letters, I gave each teacher a copy when we assembled at a sidewalk table at the same Earl's restaurant we'd visited together only three weeks before. I invited them to tell me what they would like to gain from such a research project. One teacher (previously identified as Respondent B) mentioned that she had been thinking about a specific selection of literature -- a short story -- that she felt would provide an excellent context for process drama strategies. The other (Respondent A) said that she was interested in learning how to use process drama "for the students" but had not thought yet how she might go about this. She thought the research project might help her connect the experiences of the summer school class to her actual classroom program in the English language arts. I suggested that they might want to consider whether or not they wanted to participate in the project after reading through the letter I had given them. One suggested

they take some time and read through it right then. I sat and waited as they read, nervously realizing that the whole research project would either fly or die depending on their answers. When they finished reading, Respondent B turned to Respondent A and asked, "What do you think, _____?" Respondent A replied, "I think let's go for it." to which Respondent B agreed, "Sure, why not? Let's go for it." At this point we talked a little more about the research project and then I asked them how they felt about the issue of anonymity or using pseudonyms in the research document. Both agreed that they would like to have their own names used in my report of the research and so Respondent A and Respondent B will now be referred to as Carol and Mary-Ellen.

We concluded our first meeting that sunny August day with a plan in place to begin working together in October since both teachers felt September would be too hectic a month to initiate a research project. Since I was preparing for my candidacy exam, I favoured October as the earliest possible commencement date for the research project. Both Carol and Mary-Ellen wanted to get official approval from their principals to participate in the research. I was also required to secure official approval from the School Board office in order to conduct research in Mary-Ellen's school. I submitted an application to the Cooperative Activities Program at the University of Alberta and was granted permission in October to conduct research at Champlain Junior High/Elementary School. Although both teachers agreed to have their own names used in the reporting of the research, the names of both schools have been changed in the interests of confidentiality. Since Carol teaches in Hope Private School, she suggested that permission from the principal would be sufficient since he would be responsible for discussing it with the private school board.

I received phone calls from both Carol and Mary-Ellen in early September informing me that their principals supported our research project. I wrote to both principals to thank them for their support and to provide them with some information about my teaching background and the research project.

Reconnaissance

Kemmis and McTaggert (1988) emphasize how important it is for all participants in an action research group to engage in a "reconnaissance" phase before commencing the action research process. Reconnaissance allows participants to talk about their present situation, identify their own educational values, think about how their work will fit into the larger context of schooling, and construct an understanding of their own past experience as educators in relation to the research context (p.54-55). Although we had participated together as students in the summer school class and had met briefly in August to discuss our goals and expectations of the project, Carol, Mary-Ellen and I needed to find out more about each other before we began to work together in a collaborative group. Carr and Kemmis (1986) state that "educational activities cannot be observed without reference to the shared educational values and beliefs of those engaged in educational pursuits" (p.111). We needed to find out about each others' educational values and beliefs and, for this reason, I phoned both teachers in late September to schedule a three-way reconnaissance meeting where we could share more information about our individual experiences as educators and our hopes for the research. We could not find a date that would work for all three of us during this busy month so I decided to conduct one-on-one interviews with each of the two teachers to record information about their educational backgrounds and answer any questions they might have about mine. The interview with Carol took place on September 30, 1997. Mary-Ellen's schedule was so busy that she requested that we do the interview just before our first collaborative meeting on October 8, 1997. Both interviews were tape recorded and transcribed and complete transcriptions provided to both teachers.

Although I had jotted down some possible questions to ask both teachers before the interviews, I wanted to keep the conversation as open-ended as possible. Educational researchers working within the qualitative paradigm suggest that open-ended interviews elicit more extended and valuable response from participants than highly structured interview protocols (Biddle & Anderson, 1986; Denzin, 1989). The interviews were held

in my home, as were all the collaborative meetings in the months ahead. Some researchers who have worked in collaborative research recommend the home environment as conducive to building rapport and trust among participants (Hollingsworth, 1994; Luce-Kapler, 1997). Since I live alone, my home provided a location where we would be uninterrupted by outside distractions. I prepared tea or coffee and "goodies" before each interview and for all of the collaborative meetings that were to follow in the months ahead. Mary-Ellen was to remark in a later meeting that one of the big changes that resulted for her from the research process were the extra inches around her waist from eating my goodies. Humour was a pervasive quality that characterized our collaborative relationship from the beginning.

The initial interviews with Carol and with Mary-Ellen provided me with the same kind of knowledge about their professional backgrounds and educational values as I had provided to them about me in my August letter to them. I share this information about each of my collaborative partners in order to deepen the readers' understanding of the all the "cast members" who participated in the collective creation of our research experience.

Carol's Story

Carol told me that she had wanted to be a teacher since Grade 9 when she began teaching Sunday School and discovered how much she enjoyed being around little children. She trained as a teacher in the United States and began her teaching career with Grades three and four in a Lutheran school. She married and then when she and her husband moved, she decided to have babies and do her Master's degree. She taught as a substitute teacher for several years when her children were young but then decided she would like to go back to teaching full time once all her children were in school. She had been back teaching full time for three years when the project began. Carol teaches in a Grade 4-5-6 three-way split classroom of eighteen students. She is also responsible for teaching music to junior high level students in her school and another teacher comes into her classroom to teach Art to her students.

I asked Carol to tell me about the aspects of teaching that brought her the most satisfaction. She responded with enthusiasm:

> Oh I love it when the light bulb goes on in children's eyes [laughter]. When you've taught something and they're not sure and they give you that questioning look and you attack it again from a different angle. Or if you have to do an actual tutoring time with them one-on-one -- but even looking over the classroom, and you can tell they didn't get it and you try it again from a different perspective and then the light bulb goes on. And so that's very satisfying -- knowing that you were able to lead them a little deeper in some educational process. And then in our school, because it's a private Christian school -- the excitement of being able to work out relationships with our Christian faith -- with God as part of our -- as our communication and talking together instead of just having law and "this is the way it's always going to be and children, you must toe the line this way and go sit down at your desk because you're broken the law or broken this relationship" -- But being able to work it out and forgive each other -- So that family and community happening in my classroom and relationship I find very satisfying.
>
> The dissatisfying parts probably -- although I haven't experienced it yet in the three years cause it's triple grades and its living on the edge and the excitement -- could be some - well - redundancy of teaching the same math lesson the same way. And I'm not a good candidate to be bored with that because still -- you know teaching three math lessons -- you remember "Oh yeah, I did teach that last year and I remember there was some frustration there. I'll try it a little differently this year." So still the novelty of teaching. So there isn't -- at this point -- three years -- the beginning of the third year into this particular job - um - dissatisfaction in the classroom. I really love what I'm doing and I'm really happy to be working there and - um the dissatisfaction of boredom or repetitiveness or - um - antics that children pull hasn't settled in yet for me. It's still novel and new and fresh.
>
> (Interview transcript, September 30, 1997)

I asked Carol if she had any stories she'd like to share about her teaching but she couldn't think of any at that moment. My next question was designed to find out what connections Carol was making between the summer school class and our research project possibilities.

> **L:** Okay -- thinking back to our summer school drama class, what do you think you might bring from that class to our collaborative research project? Have you had the chance to think about that?
>
> **C:** Yes, and I think that the part that really stands out for me is being able to do drama for us -- that process drama is our own group that we're dealing with. Prior to this class, I think I always thought of drama being the theatre production and working on a particular project that you're going to present in front of other groups -- and that's wonderful -- that's great and my classroom does that with their Christmas project. But from the summer school class -- of being able to stop in mid-stream in a story and then "Okay, put your books away. Now let's talk about what these characters could have been thinking at the time or what these characters might do next. You know? What *might* you say if you're the main character or one of the other characters. So that's exciting to me. Implementing it is still scary to

me because I haven't done it yet this fall but being able to do that project of "this is for us and that's drama". Drama doesn't have to be polished and smooth for other people. It's experiential and we can have fun -- controlled fun -- with these groups of people that we have right here. We can just go for it. So I think that's -- that's something that I'm looking forward to with whatever we take -- plays or poetry or skits or something they've even written --

L: Sure..

C: To move the body around and be thinking and implementing ... (pause)

L: Are there any dramas that we did in the class that particularly stand out for you?

C: I liked the one when we were in -- I want to say the watchmaker but that wasn't what it was. It was the day we did the body movements with the machinery and the shoe factory? Or?

L: Oh yeah. "Yallery Brown".

C: Was it? Yeah -- what he would have done in this factory and all the people doing different things and yet it made a picture for the story of all these units functioning together. And a portion of that story of what it might be like being there. So that pops up first.

L: Mmm hmm.

C: Then there were the moodier ones with the , - uh - tombstone. I think that was one of our first days so there was the eeriness and the moodiness of the vines growing up and then the -- the -- Crane?

L: Oh, "The Crane Wife"?

C: That was kind of more touching and heady and happy, I guess -- compared to "Yallery Brown" which could have been looked at with a little bit of comic [?] even though there was mischievous -- a mischievous major character there. So those are probably the two.

(Interview transcript, September 30, 1997)

We talked about the research project and Carol's understanding of what the project could offer her became clearer:

C: Hopes that -- um -- that this can be very practical for me and then my classroom in the future -- that I'll have confidence after this is said and done to be able to -- you know -- do it more spontaneously.

L: Mm hmm.

C: Since that's not my nature, it's not my given profession, it's not anything in my past history. But I think that if you have a little bit of practice with somebody in the classroom doing this. That's my hope, that my confidence will be there. To fly with some other things totally by the end of next year and on my own in the future.

(Interview transcript, September 30, 1997)

Carol also mentioned that she had not found any specific selections of literature that she wanted to work with yet but she was starting to look for these. Carol expressed her concerns that she didn't know as much about drama as either Mary-Ellen or I did but she was excited about the possibility of learning from both of us. At the end of the interview, I felt that I knew Carol better than I had before. I also had a much clearer picture of who

Carol believed I would be in her classroom. The stage was set for the development of a relationship that was characterized by an almost "mentor-protégé" quality for most of the research project. My relationship with Mary-Ellen unfolded in a different way.

Mary-Ellen's Story

When I asked Mary-Ellen to talk about her teaching background, I began to understand the breadth of drama experience and the depth of passion for drama that she was bringing to the collaborative process. Her references to drama and theatre as shaping her educational career began on the first page of the interview transcript:

M: How did I come to be a teacher? Well, when I graduated from high school, I had long had the desire to be a teacher, from the time I was quite young -- probably as a result of trying to fulfill my mother's wish to be a teacher and she couldn't and both my sister and I went into teaching. Yeah. My sister's a professor at UBC and -- and -- Anyway, I got to high school and I discovered drama which surprised my mother quite a lot. And I found that that -- plus my English -- was probably my reason for continuing on in high school. Then when I got to university I had to make a decision -- or I felt I had to make a decision at that point -- whether I would go into professional theatre. There wasn't, of course, a B.F.A. program at U of A at that time -- it happened two years later -- but --um -- I had to make a decision: professional theatre or teaching and of course, the practical side of me -- you know, wanting to have food on the table.

L: Mmm hmm.

M: You got the picture.

L: Right -- I -- yeah...

M: I decided that I would go into education. I would major in English and Drama and teach. You know "those who can do, those who can't teach" (mutual laughter) Isn't that awful? Any way -- So I got my degree with those two as a major and felt -- I know this probably sounds incredibly naive -- but all the way through my university and into my first couple of years of teaching I carried with me that truly altruistic -- teacher -- hmmm -- *myth*. If I could touch but one child...

L: Mmmm

M: I would have succeeded and I think that even -- there are still times when touching that one child really makes it worthwhile.

L: Yeah.

M: But that was when I went in -- that philosophy -- that mythology -- is what I started out with. You know, very keen, eager young thing -- very wet behind the ears. Umm --From there I taught at -- I've always taught at the junior high level. That's twenty-three years now.

L: Oh boy.

M: This is why the gray hairs. (mutual chuckles) And I've taught grades 7, 8 and 9. I've taught Grade 7 Health, I've taught something called Grade 9 Literature and Grade 9 English and Grade 8 of course -- that was when I was at S--- P---. Then I came into the city. I was in S--- P--- for two years then I came into the city. And I taught again, 7, 8 and 9 Drama; 7, 8 and 9 English. Then I went -- I was at Stratford for a year and then I went to L---

> - School and I taught again Grade 7, 8 and 9 Drama; Grade 7, 8 and 9 English Language Arts (which it was called by then). I taught Grade 9 academic challenge English. And I would say that pretty much continued. I found at L------ School I started teaching less of the younger grade -- grades 7 and 8 -- and started being more in a position where I was teaching Grade 9 almost exclusively. But at L------ that was possible -- with a large junior high and *just* a junior high. And I *always* carried the 7, 8 and 9 Drama. That was always my baby and a lot of my time was spent there. Then I was pregnant and had my own child and so I left teaching for the year. When I returned, I went to Champlain and again I was involved teaching academic challenge. At that school it was an option. It was not necessarily integrated into the core subjects where you had a class of -- At L------ we were a site, centre for A.C. so that's how I got to be involved with English Language Arts Academic Challenge. And I did that -- I think -- for three years at least at Champlain -- er -- L------. But at Champlain I was in charge for a couple of years of the A.C. option. I was teaching primarily 8 and 9 English Language Arts and all of the Drama. And in the last -- oh three -- three years, I guess, at Champlain I've been almost exclusively the Grade 9 English language arts teacher -- and the Grade 8 and 9 Drama teacher.
> (Interview transcript, October 8, 1997)

I knew from the very beginning of the research process that my relationship with Mary-Ellen would unfold in a different way from my collaboration with Carol. I was wondering, even at this initial reconnaissance phase, how a collaborative relationship among the three of us would unfold and how our individual purposes and goals could be negotiated into a shared vision for the research. Mary-Ellen told me some teaching stories during this interview. Her passion for teaching came through clearly in one story she told about a former student who came back to visit her and thank her for classes in English and Ancient Civilizations that Mary-Ellen had taught her:

> M: She said "I hear the words and I realize that's from Greek mythology and I know the story. Or I see symbols and I recognize it as a symbol. And I recognize all the depths of meaning that it might have." And she said, And so my life is so much richer. I see so much more and I'm in tune with so much more. And I feel connected to a past that helps me know who I am."
> (Interview transcript, October 8, 1997)

When I asked Mary-Ellen to make connections between our summer school class and her goals for the research project, she made reference to this story and this student:

> **L:** Well (pause) Thinking back to our summer school drama class -- on this cold winter night --. What do you think you might bring from that class to our research project?
> **M:** Well -- I think what I've come out of the Process Drama course with is a desire to use that. Not perhaps as a psychological tool to delve into psychological

situations. But to use it as a tool to help students gain that deeper appreciation of literature.

L: Mmm hmm

M: Just as this student was able to make connections because of the information she gleaned in a couple of courses that I taught her. I think that using a drama approach to literature can deepen a student's understanding and response. And if it deepens their understanding and response to the literature then the next step should be -- I *think* anyway that it should follow -- that it will help to deepen their understanding of interpersonal relationships. Cause they'll have to delve into this in order to fully explore the piece of literature.

L: That makes sense to me. (chuckle) Okay -- Have you thought at all about the kinds of questions that -- that you'd like to look at -- umm -- we'll play around with some ideas tonight -- but have you thought about how you want to start working with process drama?

M: Mmm. Yes and no. Mmm. I have a piece of literature I want to work with. And I have given you a copy of the short story by Evan Hunter, "On the Sidewalk, Bleeding". I've taught this for more years than -- than I care to remember. But it is an extremely moving piece of literature and I think it relates to their age group. Ahh -- I guess I'm wondering exactly how am I going to start this? And I suppose another question I'm also wondering is how much time can I reasonably allot to this?

L: Mmm hmm.

(Interview transcript, October 8, 1997)

Mary-Ellen had a picture of the place process drama could have in her English language arts program from the very beginning of the research process. I wondered if there was anything further I could give that she didn't have already. I learned, as the months progressed, that there were going to many opportunities where we could give to each other. But this was an idea yet to be explored and a lesson still to be learned when we met in October to begin our research journey together. The reconnaissance we undertook during the initial interviews and our first collaborative planning meeting (which occurred on October 8, 1997 immediately after Mary-Ellen's interview) was only the first step of our collaborative action research journey to collective creation.

Our story: The Collaboration Begins

I began experiencing the tension between my need to adhere to the structures of Kemmis and McTaggert's (1988) action research planning cycle and a conflicting need to step back from the traditional role of university researcher as "expert" on the first night that Carol, Mary-Ellen and I met to plan our collaborative experience together. Miller (1997)

articulates the dilemma I was feeling in her own experience of school-university collaborative action research:

> Do my curriculum theorizings and my perspectives on what curriculum is and should be as a field of study have any relation to the daily political, personal, social, and cultural dynamics, situations and pressures upon these teachers? Does what constitutes research as well as curriculum theorizing and construction as a living practice vary in both form and substance for classroom and university teachers? And how might I attend, as a university researcher and teacher, to those differences in ways that do not replicate the very unequal power relations against which I write and research? (p.206)

The transcript of our first collaborative meeting on October 8, 1997 provides many examples of how my need to structure the collaborative experience around my needs as a researcher conflicted with creating opportunities where the collaborative process could unfold in a natural and organic way. I took a leadership role and opened the discussion with research concerns related to data collection and theoretical connections:

> L: Now, I just put these together. I want to mention that we'll try to follow the action research cycle which is -- now this first one, of course, reflection and analysis, isn't going to happen this time because we don't really have anything to reflect on. But -- uh -- so the way this cycle works is first of all -- you know -- coming out of questions and concerns, what do we want to find out . Then planning is -- okay what's our plan -- what are we going to do in the classroom? How are we going to find out -- the data collection bit is how are we going to find out what's happening with the students in the classroom and with us and everything while we're putting our action plan into being. And then when we come back to the next meeting we would talk about that cycle. So we'd sort of do a cycle --- sort of -- we'd meet every three weeks or whatever -- so we'd sort of do a cycle in that time? Does that sound okay to everybody? So I just did some of these forms up and I think we've each got four of them. So that's the first thing in this book. Then I took -- I wanted to come out -- we talked -- Carol and I talked a little bit about it -- stories that she was looking at in *Journeys* . And you have your -- Mary-Ellen brought her story too -- okay. She wants to start with. And so -- uh -- what I thought I could contribute. I looked for -- oh, you've got one [Carol's story is distributed] Okay -- good stuff -- okay -- "Duke Pishposh of Pash" (chuckle) Oh this looks good -- okay -- good -- super. Okay , so what I -- what I came up with was a couple of models -- two different models. This is the one that's the Story Drama model that David Booth put together. And this is the book [shows Booth's book]. It's *Reading, Writing and Roleplaying across the Curriculum* and I like it. It's got some good dramas in it that he's done -- so that's where this comes from. And then the second one -- and -- oh and these are some dramas -- these are three dramas that I did. I just threw them in there cause I found them and I thought "okay". These are done on that Story Drama model.
>
> (Collaborative Meeting #1 - p. 1)

The teachers came to the meeting with selections of literature, expecting to begin the practical task of selecting drama strategies to support students' exploration of the literature. I immediately plunged into a discussion of the action research planning cycle, introduced more theoretical resources and provided them with samples of my work. Even though I expressed my own desire to avoid unequal power relationships at another point in the transcript, I was busily creating them in the first few moments of the meeting:

> L: And jumping in with both feet and then realizing they've got too much on their plate. "How can we address students' concerns or questions about the purposes of drama work and their safety level in this work? So those are the questions I came up with. And I mean this is just a sample -- Uh -- and the action plan "An introduction sequence which focuses primarily on creating procedures, safety and security for students". And data collection -- observation notes -- possibly some tape recording which focuses on student responses to working with drama, their questions about drama, etc. So that -- that's just playing around with one way you could go on this plan -- so -- And the other thing -- I want to say now -- I did -- I am sort of blathering on and taking a leadership role tonight but I don't want to be -- I don't want to be someone who is saying "This is what we'll do and how we'll do it." Because that's not -- the whole purpose of this research is to get away from that. You know? So this -- I mean now I'm open to what you people feel about -- yeah -- that's just sort of an intro. (pause)
>
> M: And a heavy silence pervaded the room. (Laughter)
>
> L: I'll get (inaudible) You can talk about me while I'm gone.
>
> M: Well, I've got a few things to say. How about you, Carol?
>
> (Collaborative Meeting #1 - p.2)

Luckily, both Mary-Ellen and Carol had a few things to say and the remainder of our first collaborative meeting displayed a more equal distribution of conversation than the first few minutes. We talked about the theory to a certain extent, comparing Booth's (1994) model to Neelands' (1990) model of process drama.

> M: Actually I can see the big thing. I mean it's exactly the sort of stuff I was talking about. Elaborate on the subject of the story. Invent on written (?) things referred to in the story. Build the drama from the children's responses to the story. Extend the story back in time or forward into the imagined future. When we brainstormed this over cafe lattes at the end of the summer -- that was exactly the kind of thing I was talking about doing.
> L: So maybe Booth's a good place to start --
> M: Mmm hmm. Mmm hmm.
> L: How does it look to you?
> M: I'm still reading.
> L: Oh, great (chuckle) (pause)

M: Actually, you know Linda, I don't see all that much difference between Booth and... Maybe I shouldn't say this --
L: Say whatever you want (chuckle).
M: Between Booth and Jonothan Neelands. I mean he talks about a starting point -- psychological processes -- That's nicely vague. Where Booth is very specific. The psychological process could be -- ah -- creating a drama from the implications of the story in the lives of the children. Am I right?
L: Sure.

(Collaborative Meeting #1 - p. 4)

Mary-Ellen displayed her grasp of the underlying theoretical concepts of process drama from this early point in the collaborative process. Carol, on the other hand, was quick to identify herself as a beginner:

C: But that's been my drama experience. [reference to a play she was in high school] Nothing in university and then nothing until I took this curriculum class during the summer. So I'm coming in as a total greenhorn that wants to use some of the language arts stories that we go through in our curriculum. And implement them with body movement and thinking processes instead of just always paper and pencil when finishing up the story. So that's why I'm very green at this. So the process things that you're doing tonight well -- (inaudible). Even some of these -- [loud noise -- something knocked over] You don't have a page number thing. (referring to the four pages of dramas from Linda's presentation mentioned earlier) Even these selected books for drama - the suggested guidelines -- um. "Is the theme an important one?" Well that's interesting -- themes such as the importance of friendship, the values of cooperation -- power of kindness -- good pervades evil -- . Now thinking back -- how could I -- how would this particular story that I picked really manifest itself? Your clue last week of the folk tale was -- was what got me interested because we did folk tales this summer -- and they were fun -- and there are folk tales at this level -- so let's try one of these --

(Collaborative Meeting #1 - p.3)

We spent some time talking about management issues in drama and about the differences between process and performance perspectives (an issue that will be addressed in more detail in the next chapter). At one point Mary-Ellen mentioned that she thought her Drama students might take a leadership role in the process work students would do in the English language arts classroom. The conflict I experienced between expressing my own views on this idea and my desire to be supportive of the teachers is evident in the interchange that occurred between us:

L: No, no. Hey -- it's your room -- you make the decisions --
M: But you've got a problem with this --
L: Yeah I do.
M: Yeah, okay. What is it? It was just an idea -- we were just talking about it.

L: Yeah -- no. The problem I have with it is -- I'd like to see everybody start from an equal playing field?
M: Yeah.
L: And I would be afraid -- yeah -- that it makes the drama students -- the people who are in drama -- the experts. And I would like -- I'd like to see a situation where everybody in the class starts on an equal playing field -- and whether you're taking a drama class or not -- doesn't really matter in terms of the work that we're doing in this English language arts --
M: You're right Linda. [all talking -- inaudible]
M: Yeah -- she's right. I've nixed that -- nixed that out.
[Laughter]
L: Oh dear -- Am I being directive? I don't want to be directive
M: You're right -- you're right -- I think -- yeah -- I think you're right. I mean I'm thinking of it from my perspective -- if a member of the class -- I think that would be neat but -- But I'm thinking as an adult -- I'm not thinking as a fourteen year old. And it could be -- it could be -- Here's Sarah -- drama student, president of the student council -- And another -- another "honour job" or another -- Since she's worked with me in "Showcase" -- But piling all this stuff on and it's not equal anymore. And it's no good for Sarah either --
L: No -- I think it puts -- you know -- I just -- I'd really like to see a -- work with them
M: I think that's a good point -- start from a -- work with them -- Where can I write that down? Put that in action plan? Action plan.

(Collaborative Meeting #1 - p. 14)

It is interesting that the very concern I was expressing about the students beginning from an "equal playing field" was mirrored in my concern for the collaborative group process. I wanted the three of us to be on an "equal playing field" too and my initial understanding of what it meant for us, as collaborating teachers and a university researcher with widely varying degrees and types of drama experience, to achieve equality was a concern that pervaded my own construction of meaning throughout the research project. I wrote about this concern in my research journal the following day:

> The responses were different -- they come from different places but I heard a common thread. They really both want their students to enjoy learning and get their heads into books and stories. Carol is coming to this project with no drama background and is working with younger students. Mary-Ellen is coming to it with extensive theatre background and many years of teaching drama in junior high. And I'm coming from the same grade level experience as Carol, a similar theatre background to Mary-Ellen and a drama space that seems to be in between. We're almost like three points on a triangle. Can we turn the triangle into a circle?
>
> (Research Journal, October 8, 1997)

The process of turning the triangle into a circle took us from that first evening in early October until April of 1998. There were problems of time, pressures from outside the

research group that impinged, false starts, and unanticipated changes to my initial vision for the research project. But when action research is a living practice (Carson & Sumara, 1997) one comes to understand that the "unanticipated" affords as many opportunities for growth in understanding as does a prescribed research design. Before one can stray from a plan, however, there must be a plan in place. I shall pause briefly in telling the story of our collaborative experience to describe our starting point in relation to questions of data collection and data sources.

Data Sources and Data Collection

In my initial research proposal, I envisioned using a number of data sources to document the collaborative work I would be doing with the teachers. I felt that a greater variety of sources would enable me to present a more complete picture of the research experience for all involved -- researcher, teachers and students -- and would ensure triangulation of results (Guba, 1981, p.85). One data source that was under my control was a research journal set up according to the dialectical format recommended by Berthoff (1987) with entries on one page and a blank facing page which would be used to record my reflections, questions and comments on the journal entries. I did keep such a journal throughout the course of the research project but I did not write in it every day. I recorded observations in this journal after planning meetings, after one-on-one interactions with each of the teachers and after classroom experiences. On one occasion, I recorded my reflections on students' writing in this journal. I started reviewing my entries and commenting on them in January of 1998.

A second source of data for which I could take responsibility was field notes recorded after each classroom experience. During the first month of school-based action, I provided each teacher with copies of the field notes I'd recorded in her classroom. At our November meeting, both Carol and Mary-Ellen expressed an interest in seeing each other's field notes:

> L: You've got a really good point and it's a really important issue and it's something that I'm really glad you brought up. I have -- if you notice --

given you different packages both times. I've given you -- except for the planning meetings we were all together. And I've done that -- my reasoning for that is --uh -- I -- It's the time thing. I

M: You're thinking giving us so much reading that --

L: Exactly. And I'm thinking do you want to read over everything -- Do you want to read over this twenty-some page phone transcript of the meeting that Mary-Ellen and I did and do you want to read over, Mary-Ellen, all the observation notes and field notes that Carol --

M: Actually I would like to see the field notes. I'd like to get an idea of what was going on in the classroom when you were there. It would give me an idea of what I'm going into.

L: Okay -- well I can -- I mean I can't do it right now --

M: I mean I'm going to skim it -- All I'm going to do is skim it -- but

L: Yeah --

M: My eyes are really bothering me --

L: You're tired -- guilt - guilt

M: I think that Carol might

(all talk at once -- inaudible)

M: It's a little extra paper --

C: But I think after you've gone through yours I'd like to see the debriefing on what happened in your classroom too. I think that's a good point -- the actual -- like whatever you did for your planning and whatever you thought was going to fly. And then you got in the middle of it and some things flew and some things ehh weren't maybe so good. And then what your reflection or maybe your ethno -- ethnog --

L: Let's just call 'em field notes

M: Field notes.

C: Field notes of the synopsis would benefit me as you'd like to see -- as you say -- what happened.

M: I'd like to see what happened -- yeah.

L: And you two are really okay with switching --

C: Oh that's fine

L: That's fine with both of you --

(Collaborative Meeting #3 - pp. 12-13)

From this point forward, I provided both teachers with full copies of the field notes from both schools so that they could keep informed of each other's work. I was fully responsible for writing up all the field notes throughout the research project except for one three week period in Carol's classroom in November. I taught a demonstration unit to her students and Carol kept observation notes while I was working with the students. I used her notes to flesh out my own recollections of the classroom events to produce the November field notes.

A third source of data for which I could be accountable was transcription of our collaborative meetings. All five collaborative meetings were tape recorded. At the end of the research project when we were planning a social outing to celebrate, Mary-Ellen asked

if "Charlie" the tape recorder was coming too since he was the fourth member of our collaborative group. "He" shared space at my dining room table with the teapot, goodies, and the mounds of paper that seemed to accumulate at every meeting. Both teachers seemed comfortable with "Charlie's" presence and he did provide us all with full transcriptions of our shared conversation. Since I provided both teachers with full transcriptions of every collaborative meeting, we were able to refer to these transcripts and check on our plans, ideas and observations throughout the duration of the project.

I had also asked both teachers if I could collect samples of student writing throughout the course of the research. Mary-Ellen provided me with full photocopied sets of students' written response to the literature that was mediated by drama work as well as written student evaluations of their experience of drama in the English language arts. Carol had her students start a "Drama duotang" in November of 1997 when we began the classroom work. She collected and gave me these duotangs to take with me on a regular basis. I would photocopy students' written responses to drama and to the literature mediated by drama since Carol's photocopy budget was limited. I would then return the class set of duotangs the next week when I was out in the school. The student writing samples were one important source of information which illuminated my understanding of how students were experiencing the fruits of our collaboration and action planning.

Other sources of data collected over the course of the project included our joint planning documents (unit plans and lesson plans), copies of the selections of literature the teachers chose for classroom work with drama, notes and letters that passed between us and some of the drama artifacts or "props" that teachers and/or students produced in preparation for or within the context of classroom drama experience.

We did discuss videotaping or audiotaping classroom sessions as another possible source of data during our first planning meeting but decided that an audiotape of a classroom full of students would be of such poor sound quality that it wouldn't justify the disruption to our classroom work with the students. The issue of videotaping came up

again at our third planning meeting in November and then again in February. Outside factors (I didn't have a car to transport equipment after Christmas) interfered with our plans to utilize videotape as a data source. Carol did bring her own video camera to school for our last session in March but I didn't get the chance to view the tape we made of the students' work on this occasion.

Another data source that we discussed on several occasions was teacher reflective journals. I had mentioned that I would like to have them keep weekly journals when we first met in August. My literature review of school-university partnership research had convinced me that it was very important to have both their voices represented directly in the research document. Even at this point, they both expressed their reservations about finding the time to write on a weekly basis. I brought the matter up again at our third collaborative meeting:

> L: Yeah -- we'll talk about this -- we'll talk about this. Okay -- so I think we -- we've done some neat stuff here. Anybody had any time for written reflections so far?
> (Laughter)
> M: No.
> C: No.
> L: No?
> C: I'm sorry and I apologize -- so that'll be --
> (all talking at once)
> L: Written reflection may involve writing on comments on those transcripts in response to something that's written there -- Writing comments on the field notes in response to something that's written there -- Maybe that's another way we could look at it. You know? Like if something sparks off something when you're reading through there and you want to say something, just write it down in the margin.
> C: Mmm hmm
> L: And let's --
> C: We'll go over that --
>
> (Collaborative Meeting #3 - pp. 20-21)

Although both teachers made reference to notes they'd recorded in the margins of transcripts and field notes at our ensuing meetings, I never did see the notes they wrote directly. We revisited the issue again at our fourth collaborative meeting in February when we were discussing my first attempt at coding the data:

> M: What does "collecting data, teacher input, writing" mean?
> L: Okay -- that is about when I mentioned you keeping reflective journals I think.

M: Oh shoot -- which also ranks under "plans that didn't happen" [Much laughter from all of us]
M: One thing for this class I'm taking is a reflective journal so I'm going to have to do it.

(Collaborative Meeting #4 - p. 17)

It became apparent to me early in the research process that it would be counterproductive to push either Carol or Mary-Ellen to keep weekly reflective journals when they both expressed the belief that they would not have the time to do this. I decided that their voices would have to come through in their comments at planning meetings, in field notes and in their planning work. I was experiencing the "reflectivity-activity dilemma" (Knight et al, 1992) personally. Letting go of the need for teacher reflective journals in my data base was one step that I took towards understanding the differences between school and university cultures at a tacit as well as a cognitive level.

Although I had originally intended to conduct three interviews with each teacher to extend the data base, this plan was also changed in response to the teachers' schedules. In addition to the first formal interviews conducted in September and October, I met with each teacher individually in January of 1998 to reflect on the research process and discuss their plans for the winter term. These one-on-one meetings replaced our January collaborative meeting since we could not find an evening in this month when all three of us were available to meet. The one-on-one January meetings combined reflection on the research process up to that point with planning for the winter term. Instead of final individual interviews with each teacher, we scheduled a collaborative "wrap-up and reflection" meeting for April 27, 1998. I was very familiar with the issue of time pressures on teachers by this point and did not suggest conducting an additional interview since I felt it would be redundant and place extra time demands on both teachers that were unnecessary.

Data collection was completed with the final field notes recorded on March 20, 1998 and the final collaborative meeting transcription from April 27, 1998.

Negotiating Change: The Planning Process over Time

It became evident during the first month of collaborative research that trying to do all of our planning for two different classrooms with two different age groups of children and two teachers who had very different approaches to the process in one collaborative planning meeting held every three weeks was not going to work. The transcript of our second collaborative meeting, scheduled on October 27, 1997, gave us all a clear indication of the problem we were facing. Pages 4-10 consist almost exclusively of conversation between Mary-Ellen and Linda with only six one-line comments or questions from Carol. These pages record discussion about how to integrate process drama strategies into Mary-Ellen's Grade 9 instructional action plan for "On the Sidewalk, Bleeding" by Evan Hunter. Pages 2 and 11-14 record an almost exclusive conversation between Carol and Linda with four one to two sentence comments by Mary-Ellen. Carol and I were discussing her folk tale unit and the selection of literature she wanted to extend through drama. References to scheduling problems, questions and possibilities between Linda and each teacher account for at least eight pages of the 23 page transcript.

The transcript of the meeting presented in concrete form a concern I expressed in my research journal the morning after this meeting:

> We spent a lot of time last night talking about scheduling and when I'll be out in the schools doing the first round of research. I felt anxious because I felt like we were wasting Carol's time while Mary-Ellen and I were talking about her schedule and Mary-Ellen's time when Carol and I were discussing hers. I'm wondering if our collaborative meetings are really three-way collaborations. We also talked about how great it would be if they could visit each other's classrooms. The way it is now, I feel like I am the connecting link between them. If we are going to be a team we need to use our time together as time together. I don't feel that that is happening yet. Maybe it will get better when we're actually into the teaching and the classroom research.
>
> Everyone seemed so tired last night. I know I was tired and so were they. None of us seemed to have the energy we brought to the last meeting.
>
> (Research Journal, October 27, 1997)

Since the first classroom action cycle with Carol began before Mary-Ellen was ready to begin classroom work, I asked Carol how she felt about the way we used the time at our

second collaborative meeting when I was out at the school. She also expressed some concerns about the amount of time she spent listening to planning talk that had nothing to do with her. We decided to raise the issue at our collaborative meeting on November 24, 1997. The rather extended dialogue that ensued is presented here to demonstrate how we approached the problem collaboratively and also to demonstrate our growing awareness of the limitations that were being imposed by institutional structures on our research group.

L: Okay, so we'll say tentatively January the 7th. So that takes care of No. 1. I just wanted to -- maybe we need to talk about number 3 first -- maybe it's the most important one. How can we use our planning meetings as a threesome most effectively? (reads the rest of number 3 on November 24 agenda). And Carol and I talked about this on the playground and you and I have talked about it on the phone, Mary-Ellen. What is happening because you're in different situations -- you're coming from different places -- you have different needs -- things are going differently. I'm wondering if you two are feeling that you're sitting waiting for the other one to do their thing? Do you know what I mean? Uh -- I'm struggling with how to make our time most rewarding and supportive to everyone and I'm wondering if our planning meetings are meeting everyone's needs. So -- I'm going to shut up now.

C: Okay -- well Linda and I have talked -- Linda and I talked too, Mary-Ellen, about this meeting each other's needs and where we're coming from in our different programs. And we've been able to visit because Linda's been at school several times over the past month or few weeks. And the big bottom line question was -- when I looked through the transcripts -- of the last meeting -- not the previous one but the very particular last ones -- You know, there were pages and pages of Mary-Ellen and Linda and there were pages and pages of Carol and Mary-Ellen -- er -- Carol and Linda. But nothing between -- well minimal things between the two of us. And partly I was trying to analyze for me why that is. And there's so many things that we're all -- Like Linda seems to be the common thread for all of us but for me and you -- we're very different. High school -- elementary, drama background -- no drama background, so those two entities and the fact we're not reading each other's -- um -- plays or --

L: --planning--

C: Plans -- kind of leaves us out. And I don't know how to fix that or if that's something we need to fix -- or if we just need to be aware of it -- and how do we deal with that? I know that's what Linda was concerned about -- how do we deal with that in these meetings because now all of a sudden we're implementing what we want to do -- or what we've just finished --

L: What we're just starting (to Mary-Ellen).

C: What you're just starting -- it's totally -- they're totally different. And how do you mix the oil and the water? How do we do it so that we feel we're all three dialoguing -- if that's what your purpose is. Maybe that's --

L: Well -- our purpose -- no -- but that's the thing. My purpose is to create a supportive context for you two to work with these strategies in your classrooms. That's really what the research purpose is. And it's really interesting because we had this speaker in the action research class I'm taking on Thursday nights -- and she was really good and she said "You

know, researchers have to have a bottom line question when they're doing this kind of research. And it's 'How am I helping you do what you want to do?'" How am I helping you? And that's really I think what I want to -- she calls it a moral ethic. This is Jean McNiff. I don't know if you've heard of her -- she's from Britain. She calls it a moral imperative-- an ethical imperative for people -- university people who are doing research in the schools. So that's the question I'm asking. How am I helping you? Is this process helping you? That's what -- you know -- that's what I want to talk about. Mary-Ellen --

M: Mmm hmm. (writing)

L: Oh Jean McNiff is her name. N-I-F-F. She's been up here working with Jean Clandinen -- so -- But anyway I just found -- And I could make a copy of that article -- I didn't tonight -- but I can make a copy of the article too that we had to read. But how are you feeling about it? I mean, I know you haven't really started on the doing part but you've been involved in all the meetings and the planning part.

M: Well I agree with Carol. You know, you and I dialogue and Carol and you dialogue and I'm not sure that -- you know -- that the two of us are getting much of a chance to work together. Or, in fact, if that's even possible. Cause of the difference in the background and classes.

L: And the structure of the school too. I mean like we're wrestling with -- you and I are wrestling with times for periods and location -- and working with a set, specific period of time -- a junior high setting -- where the periods are so long and then they move and --

M: If there was some way that the two of us were involved in each other's projects but that's not possible so --

C: As teachers -- in the day time hours -- that's really a good point. That is what would bind us, I think -- is if I invested part of my life in your classroom and you came over to reaffirm me and I see that that's what Linda does for me. She's modeled for me -- the greenie, you know -- things to do with my particular kids which gives me a) confidence but b) just gives me -- experience? I see this happening which I have had limited experience of that happening in a classroom. And so that network and that support and that dialogue -- you know -- our immediate dialogue and feedback and even some eye exchanges during the process of that hour and a half -- are what makes it for me. And so that's encouraging for me, gives me the oomph to try and think of things for January, February, March to do in my classroom. But unless I have something personal I think -- personally invested in seeing your kids in action. You know it's good to visit with you on a night or maybe get ideas but to have the same personal encouragement -- I don't know if that can happen either. I mean not that you're not encouraging but it's just by definition of who you guys are -- You're in my class -- you're there [to Linda]. You're not [to Mary-Ellen].

(Collaborative Meeting #3 - pp. 3-6)

We decided, as a result of this conversation, to use our three-way collaborative meetings for reflection on the research process and to schedule them much less frequently. Thus, we held only two more collaborative meetings with all three of us present during the course of the research study, one on February 9, 1998 to discuss our response to the process at a

mid-point in the research and one on April 27, 1998 to reflect on our feelings about the process a month after the action phase of the project had been completed.

From the end of November until the end of the action phase, we accomplished our collaborative planning in a one-on-one context. Mary-Ellen and I did most of our collaborative planning on the telephone. Because she was working in a junior high school which had set forty minute blocks for instruction, she wasn't able to meet with me before or after class to plan and reflect. She also had many meetings at noon hours so that period of time was also unavailable. She had a daughter to get ready in the mornings so usually arrived at the school about twenty minutes before the first bell and frequently had meetings or other commitments after school. The telephone became so important to our collaborative relationship that I went out and purchased a speaker phone so that I could record and transcribe our planning conversations. Of course, I asked Mary-Ellen's permission before doing this. I recorded one thirty-three page, single-spaced transcript of phone planning conversations we had on November 16 and November 25 of 1997. After the first action cycle in Mary-Ellen's classroom in December of 1997, our phone planning conversations were much briefer.

Carol's school situation was very different from Mary-Ellen's. Carol was usually available at noon hours or after school to reflect on classroom events and plan for the next session. We would sometimes conduct our planning meetings outdoors when Carol was on recess or after-school supervision. More often, we met in the staff room of the school after students were dismissed at 3:20 pm. We would spend between twenty and thirty minutes sitting on sofas in the conversation area discussing what had happened in the classroom, reflecting on the reasons why and planning for the next session. This pattern continued throughout the research study. Carol and I did some planning over the telephone however. I recorded one nine page transcript of a phone planning meeting we had on January 28, 1998 just before we moved into Carol's second extended action cycle. Other phone conversations we had in February and March were usually so brief and to the point

that I jotted down notes to include in my field notes rather than recording and transcribing the entire conversations.

The decision that Carol, Mary-Ellen and I made to do our planning in dyads rather than as a collaborative group was a response to time pressures experienced by both teachers and to the very different nature of each teacher's instructional circumstances. Although it was a wise decision in terms of efficiency and productive use of time, it did not allow the kind of three-way collaborative relationship I had envisaged at the beginning of the research study to develop as fully as it might have. There are, however, examples of the collegial relationship that Mary-Ellen and Carol shared and valued sprinkled throughout the transcripts of the fourth and fifth collaborative meetings. A particularly illustrative example occurred in the last collaborative meeting when we were discussing causes of stress in the research study.

> M: --But there's the whole stress of going into the unknown -- And that was a stress -- whether we voiced it at any point -- Maybe our voicing our other stresses was -- the stress of going into the unknown -- was -- What am I trying to get at here--?
> [all talk at once]
> C: There were other stresses but really the headline topic was the unknown --
> M: Really -- that's right --
> C: We've never been on this path -- we've never been on this walk before--
> M: So this was an added stress on top of the rest of the work we already had to do -- which -- you know --
> C: I think that's a good concept -- the idea of change and what that means to you energy wise--
> M: Yeah--
> C: And you know that we're in the people business -- and energy--
> M: --makes or breaks it. You walk into a classroom with no energy, you've got a dead class -- dead students--
>
> (Collaborative Meeting #5 - p. 16)

Although they had not shared the planning, they had both shared the research process with me and this sharing seemed to establish the kind of mutual respect and empathy which allowed them to finish each other's sentences and support each other's feelings. They were both teachers located in schools too, even if those two school cultures they inhabited differed in many ways. This was a bond I could only share in retrospective comments on my own past classroom teaching experience.

Into the Classroom: The Action Cycles

When I began thinking about how I would participate as a researcher in the school classrooms with the students, I considered the participant - observer continuum (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p.93) and suggested that I would probably position myself close to the participant end of the continuum. What I did not consider, before beginning the research, was that my stance on the continuum might shift back and forth over time, between classroom contexts and within the same classroom context. This was, in fact, what happened when our action research plans became a living practice.

My shifting stance in the classrooms was, for the most part, an outcome of my research purposes. I wanted to create a collaborative context where the teachers were empowered to define my role in planning and in action. Although my initial introduction to the students was similar in both schools (I spent one afternoon, October 28, in Carol's room observing and recording descriptive field notes and a morning, November 7, in Mary-Ellen's doing the same thing). Carol and Mary-Ellen made different choices from the beginning of the project about the nature and extent of my participation in their classroom instruction.

Action plans in Carol's classroom

Carol selected a variety of children's literature selections as the content resources for my demonstration unit in November, 1997, and for her own work with process drama in February and March of 1998. Since informal references are made to these selections throughout the text, the following chart is included as a central references list for children's literature selections:

Selections of Literature for Carol's Action Plans (Figure 1)

Action Cycle	Selections of Literature	References
#1 - Demonstration unit November 6-13, 1997	"Duke Pishposh of Pash" by Jay Williams (from *The Wicked Tricks of Tyl Uilenspeigel*	Williams, J. (1988). Duke Pishposh of Pash. In C. Kleitsch & A. MacInnes (Series Eds.), Journeys 5: Sail

		the Sky (pp. 62-69). Toronto: Ginn & Co.
#1 - Demonstration unit November 20-21, 1997	*The Pied Piper of Hamelin* retold by Michele Lemieux	Lemieux, M. (1993). The Pied Piper of Hamelin . Toronto: Kids Can Press Ltd.
#2 February 5-6, 1998	"2080 or 40 R.C.E." by Carol Matas (from *Zanu*)	Matas, C. (1988). 2080 or 40 R.C.E. In C. Kleitsch & A. MacInnes (Series Eds.), Journeys 5: Sail the Sky (pp. 261-269). Toronto: Ginn & Co.
#2 February 26-27, 1998	"Jason Reid Meets Quicksilver" by H.J. Hutchins (from *The Three and Many Wishes of Jason Reid*)	Hutchins, H.J. (1988). Jason Reid Meets Quicksilver In C. Kleitsch, A.MacInnes, & S. Stewart (Series Eds.), Journeys 4: Springboards (pp. 68-70).Toronto: Ginn & Co.
	"The Three and Many Wishes of Jason Reid" (excerpt)	Hutchins, H.J. (1988). The Three and Many Wishes of Jason Reid. In C. Kleitsch, A. MacInnes, & S. Stewart, (Series Eds.),Journeys 4: Tickle the Sun (pp.192-197). Toronto: Ginn & Co.
#2 March 5, 1998	"The Creature in the Classroom" by Jack Prelutsky	Prelutsky, J. (Ed.) (1983). The Random House Book of Poetry for Children. New York: Random House. (p.212).
	"Jimmy Jet and his TV Set" by Shel Silverstein	Prelutsky J. (Ed.) (1983). The Random House Book of Poetry for Children. New York: Random House. (p.187).
#2 March 19-20, 1998	*The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis	Lewis, C.S. (1950). The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe. New York: Macmillan Pub. Co.

Carol described herself as being very unsure of how to go about integrating drama strategies into her English language arts program. When we talked on the phone on November 3, 1997, I sensed her nervousness and asked if she would like me to teach the first unit as a demonstration. She thought this would work out very well for her. My own excitement about working directly with the students is evident in my research journal entry.

> I am going to start working with her class on November 6th -- this Thursday afternoon from 1pm until 2:25 pm. She wants me to do this first go round and she will take notes. She thinks my novelty will help to draw things out a bit. She wants to go with the plan I put together too. I'm excited about it -- excited about working with real children again. She told me half the permission slips are back now -- they went out on Friday.
>
> Carol brought me up to date on what her class has been doing with fairy tales. They've made stick puppets. They are working on the senses. This gives me some ideas about warm-ups I can do on Thursday. She'll have them make name tags which will really help me to learn their names. She'd like me to spend some time defining the difference between the kind of drama we're doing and doing scripted plays. Carol made a reference to the summer school class and the kinds of warm-ups we did for it. She wants to see how warm-ups lead into the context. I do have some that will work pretty well I think -- some of those concentration and focusing ones we used to do with creative drama -- especially since they're talking about the senses.
>
> I'll also do a little pre-drama context building about Holland as that is where the fairy tale takes place. Carol mentioned that she is frustrated with showing them Europe on the globe. Wonder if I can find a world map on my clip art disc? That would help. She also mentioned we would play it by ear for Friday -- maybe not this week -- we'll have to see.
>
> (Research Journal, November 3, 1997)

The reference to "playing it by ear" in the final paragraph of this entry characterizes the tentativeness of our classroom schedule in November. Carol wanted me to come out to the school and work with the students on Thursday and Friday afternoons throughout the month of November. The Remembrance Day holiday on November 11, 1997 interfered with this plan since Carol felt she needed the Friday afternoon for other work so I was only out in the school one afternoon that week. There were supposed to be two sessions during the last week of November but this schedule also had to be changed. I wrote in my research journal about my response to the change in plans.

> I just returned from Carol's school. We worked with *The Pied Piper of Hamelin* today. I used a lot of ideas from David Booth and Carol Tarlington as they have both developed dramas around this story. I ended up changing my sequence considerably though, for a couple of reasons.

> First, Carol is feeling a little overwhelmed with curriculum demands and requested that we wind up the pre-Christmas cycle tomorrow instead of next Thursday. I had planned a three lessons cycle on this story so we sat down at noon and decided what might be dropped. Since they have already worked with tableaux, we decided to delete the tableaux episode from the sequence. My second reason for changing the remaining plan was a response to the students. They seemed a little less engaged and involved with the meat of story (the children's disappearance from Hamelin) and were focusing more on the monetary aspect of getting enough gold together. As a result of their response, I did spend more time in discussion of feelings and consequences to the families of the children's disappearance than I'd planned to. I also needed to remind them about the sincerity and cooperation clauses in their contracts -- a couple of times actually. Maybe it's the winter weather!
>
> (Research Journal, November 20, 1997)

I had become very involved as a participant in this first classroom action cycle -- to the extent that my reflection seems to be more directed towards analyzing my own practice than supporting Carol's needs. Carol was recording observation notes while I was working with her students for the three weeks in November. I reflected later that this may not have been an appropriate stance for her in the classroom but she did feel that the field notes I produced from her observation notes would be very helpful in reminding her what had happened during our fairy tales unit.

Another item which is mentioned in this journal excerpt is the drama contract which I developed for the students, Carol, and me to sign (Neelands, 1984,p.27-31) in response to our collaborative group discussion about classroom management when working with drama. Although Carol did not get around to signing the students' contract, she did make reference to it later on in February and March when she took over all of the classroom instructional work with drama in the English language arts.

Carol's second action cycle did not begin until February 5, 1998. She had decided in the fall that she would not be implementing an action plan in December since she was very involved in the school's Christmas production. Initially, she felt she would be able to begin working with process drama strategies herself in January of 1998. When we met on January 19, however, other demands had delayed her plans.

> C: Well I think we want to pick something -- don't we? So that we can get something underway in February?

L: Yeah-- You're not ready to start until February?
C: Well what is today? Today's the --
L: Today's the nineteenth--
C: Nineteenth-- And -- um --
L: Does your school have break in February?
C: No, we don't have a reading week. We do have -- um -- Family Day and there are a couple -- so we're getting back into that -- not meet the parent night or meet the teacher night but the parent teacher conferences -- We try to do that every six weeks. So that's coming up in February. But I still think trying to do something in February is better for me. We have a tournament now that we've been working on -- And so -- It's a musical competition -- it's speech -- it's art -- it's drama -- it's chess, it's a spelling bee and it's basketball.
L: Oh, wow--
C: And so our Grade four to nines go -- we just all go. And they mix all the teams up with basketball so that it's not one school against the other. It's just a weekend of playing together -- team A or team blue or team red or whatever -- made up from all the six Lutheran schools in --

(January 19 Meeting with Carol, p. 8)

There is further discussion about the tournament then Carol mentions how this event is requiring her instructional time in the classroom.

C: And so -- you know -- I've taught things about speaking and standing and so there's a lot of -- kind of professional type things that the kids are learning -- So that when they present in front of the two judges, you know -- and they can recite a poem -- or they can do a poem duet -- you know -- a couple of verses -- we rehearse a couple of verses for there -- Everything's memorized -- nothing's read--
L: Mmm hmm--

(January 19 Meeting with Carol, p. 9)

She describes a bit more about the work students are doing to prepare for their trip then moves on to talk about other school demands that she must deal with in January.

C: Now this week -- this week are the exams in the morning and then in the afternoon I'm still sneaking in the regular curriculum -- the basic math and the basic spelling things -- And then -- now we need to start. We need to do our things in front of the class -- like we've filled it out and we've sent it in and we've registered -- they've practiced with their partners in their free time -- some of them have gone to a spare room at different times -- but now we need to do it -- we were going to do it in front of the group -- And now that takes a little bit of polishing and it's a big -- it's a big -- kind of social event?

[more discussion of the tournament occurs here]

C: With our exams in the mornings and our activities in the afternoons -- still have to get this ready too -- I feel like I don't want to anything in these two weeks but it would be automatically February before we could break into
L: Okay--

C: --stories again.
L: Okay -- well then let's look at February. This term my situation is I'm teaching Tuesday and Thursday mornings from eleven till twelve twenty. I told you that--
C: So your afternoons are good--

(January 19 Meeting with Carol, p. 10)

When February did arrive, Carol committed to the same one and a half hour time slots on Thursday and Friday afternoons that we had established in November. Carol's second action plan involved her as the teacher and me as the observer and recorder of field notes. Occasionally, however, she would ask me a question or invite my participation and help when the students were working in groups. I found that I slipped easily into the teacher role with these students because I had worked with them as a teacher in November. My classroom role shifted back and forth on a daily basis during Carol's experience of experimenting with drama strategies in her English language arts program.

Carol's second action cycle extended from February 5, 1998 through to March 20, 1998. Because of the parent-teacher reporting period and other commitments, we did not work with the action plan for the middle two weeks in February. Friday, March 13, was a professional development day at Carol's school so students did not attend classes. Carol taught nine drama/English language arts sessions during her second cycle and experimented with a variety of strategies and literary forms. She was especially interested in working with drama strategies to invite students' oral, dramatic and written response to poetry and short stories. During her final cycle, Carol employed a number of strategies to work with two poems ("Jimmy Jet and his TV Set" by Shel Silverstein and "The Creature in the Classroom" by Jack Prelutsky), two stories (an excerpt from the novel *Xanu* by Carol Matas and an excerpt from *The Three and Many Wishes of Jason Reid* by H.J. Hutchins - both excerpts found in the *Journeys* anthologies for Grade 5 and Grade 4). Her final drama work centred around *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis. Carol had asked me for suggestions of poetry and a novel. She selected both novel excerpts herself from the anthology sets in her classroom.

Although Carol often consulted with me about which strategies might work best with each selection of literature, she made the final choices herself. At the very beginning of Carol's second action cycle, she expressed some reservations about building a sequence of drama activities around one selection of literature as I had done in the November demonstration unit with "Duke Pishposh of Pash" and *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*. At our individual meeting in January, she expressed her reservations about taking too much time away from curriculum requirements.

> C: Well I loved what we did -- but I would like to move on to shorter things -- That we can just do more rapidly and then go on to more materials--
> L: Yeah--
> C: But I think we've really done an intensive, great beginning with neat folk tales that we did.
> L: Well -- yeah -- So -- Okay, poetry and more, more sort of one --
> C: Well you could say [simultaneously]
> L & C: --one shot--
> L: Yeah -- but more integrated -- And something more into the usual fabric that you're
> C: Forty-five minutes or whatever -- yeah-- forty five minutes-- And that's long enough for my age group.
> L: Yeah--
> C: When it comes to -- because what I do out of the curriculum for our two folk tales was sacrifice other things so that we could do -- you know -- more intense -- afternoon deals but-- We need to write consistently -- fifteen or twenty minutes -- And we still have our regular programs of doing science in there somewhere in the afternoon -- in those afternoons. So out of that hour and a half, I need to still get my phonics and I need to get a grammar lesson in once out of the two or three days that I have in the afternoon. Two afternoons I've got to get a science lesson in -- so you're talking thirty to forty minutes just for your reading program and your writing and whatever you're doing.
> L: Yeah--
> C: That's the reality of structuring--
> L: Yeah--
> C: --and accomplishing the goals of the curriculum--
> L: And we need to think about how you would integrate-- might integrate-- <u>that</u> is how <u>you</u> would do it--
> C: Yes-- I'd do a short term thing -- unless there was a real purpose -- like the fairy tale thing. You know there's a real purpose of -- it's a longer story -- and stopping and starting and making a two day -- or even a three day -- attack at it --
>
> (January 19 Meeting with Carol, pp. 4-5)

The difference between the technical curriculum paradigm within which Carol worked and the borderlands between the practical and emancipatory paradigms where I locate myself (Habermas, 1971) presented an issue I knew I wasn't going to be able to resolve in one

action research cycle. Because Carol and I were coming from two different educational value systems during this exchange, I had to make a conscious decision to refrain from challenging her assumptions. I realized then that Carol would not integrate process drama structures into her language arts instructional practice according to my purposes and goals. I would have to adapt and adjust my support and suggestions to hers. This was the course I followed throughout the remainder of the collaborative experience in Carol's classroom.

Action Plans in Mary-Ellen's classroom

Mary-Ellen teaches in a large school and is responsible for teaching several different classroom groups of students. Her days are governed by buzzers which signal students to move from one classroom to another and from one teacher to another. The halls in the school go from being deserted one moment to being filled with hurrying students for five minutes and then to being deserted again. Mary-Ellen teaches in a different school culture than the one that is inhabited by Carol and her eighteen Grade 4-5-6 students.

Mary-Ellen also chose to work with children's literature in a different way than Carol did. Mary-Ellen used only three selections of literature during the research project, using one selection for each of her three research cycles. Figure 2 (below) outlines the selections of children's literature Mary-Ellen used as resources for her action plans.

Selections of Literature for Mary-Ellen's Action Plans (Figure 2)

Action Cycle	Selection of Literature	Reference
#1 December 3-16, 1997	"On the Sidewalk, Bleeding" by Evan Hunter	Hunter, E. (1983). On the Sidewalk, Bleeding. In R.J. Ireland (Ed.). Responding to Reading: Level C. (pp. 49-54). Don Mills, Ontario: Addison-Wesley Publishers.
#2 February 17-23, 1998	"U is Part of Us" by Patricia Hancock	Hancock, P. (1982). In C. Graves & C. McClymont (Eds.). Contexts: Anthology Two. (pp. 16-23). Toronto: Nelson Canada Pub.

#3 March 11-19, 1998	"The Proof" by John Moore	Moore, J. (1982). The Proof. In C. Graves & C. McClymont (Eds.), Contexts: Anthology Two, (pp. 82-86). Toronto: Nelson Canada Pub.

Although Mary-Ellen had originally planned to begin her first action cycle in November, the competing demands and events in the complex educational world she inhabited did not allow this to happen. She had two student teachers working with her until November 14, 1997 and was committed to providing them with the opportunity to teach the Grade 9C students with whom she wanted to initiate her first drama/English language arts action plan. She also had plans in place to take students to see a production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* on December 3, 1997 and would be spending a few English language arts periods preparing them for the play and reflecting on the performance. There was also the challenge of meshing our schedules in November and December since I was supervising student teachers in the schools on Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. This commitment had not interfered with Carol's preferred schedule but it did conflict with the times Mary-Ellen was teaching the 9C students. I agreed to adjust my student-teacher supervision schedule since my schedule was more flexible than hers.

We didn't actually begin work on Mary-Ellen's first action cycle until December 3, 1997. During the first session with the twenty-seven students in Grade 9C (three or four were absent that day) Mary-Ellen spent about half the period working on "The Tempest" and discussing questions the students would be expected to respond to after they saw the production that afternoon. She introduced them to "On the Sidewalk, Bleeding" about half way through the forty minute period and then introduced me to the students. They asked me a few questions about why I was doing a doctorate and I gave them a little bit of my

own background in education. Mary-Ellen explained to them what we would be doing with the short story she had just introduced.

> She gave them a brief explanation of role-taking and when one student asked "Will we do a play about it?" she responded: "What you'll end up doing is a lot of little plays." She added that the end would be a piece of writing -- a newspaper editorial perhaps or essay. She mentioned that any time they were unclear about what was happening to ask questions. One boy asked if they would be marked on their acting skills. Mary-Ellen assured him that no one would be marked on acting skills and went on to suggest that role play would be a lot of fun. She added that she wouldn't ask anyone to be a tree! After a few more questions, she suggested we move to the story.
>
> At 10:55 am she wrote OTSB on the board and explained this was a short form for the story title. She then asked Isha (?) to provide a plot summary. One student asked for a copy of the questions since she'd lost hers. This was provided. Mary-Ellen asked that Isha do it in "short form" so that people could take notes.
>
> (Research Journal, November 28, 1997)

We didn't actually move into working with drama structures until December 4 which was a two period block of instruction for 9C. Mary-Ellen finished up work on "The Tempest" and the discussion questions for "On The Sidewalk, Bleeding" before asking students to get into groups to select the props that would help them create their characters.

Mary-Ellen had planned the drama sequence very carefully and had put an extensive amount of time into preparing props -- notes, an umbrella, a letter, among other things -- which "belonged" to characters from the story and other characters that might have been involved in the protagonist's life (the class had brainstormed this list). I had helped her create some of the props but she took full responsibility for organizing the class into groups and distributing the props to them. I found myself in a predominantly observer role throughout the six class sessions we spent working with "On the Sidewalk, Bleeding" although I did circulate among the groups of students, asking questions and making a few suggestions when students were working in their groups. Mary-Ellen did all of the teaching during this first action phase and experimented with a number of strategies we had worked with in Dr. Neelands' summer school class as well as creating some new ideas of her own.

The drama sequence began with small groups of students (four to five per group) creating tableaux (using the props as focus objects) to show moments that could have happened on the night the story's protagonist was murdered in a gang-related stabbing. Neelands (1990, p.19) refers to this strategy as the "still image". Booth (1994, p.63) identifies it as "frozen pictures". They also created one line of "internal dialogue" for each character in the "picture" to describe that character's thoughts at the moment when the tableau was occurring. Internal dialogue was a term we used to describe the strategy Booth (1994) calls "thought-tracking" (p.64) and Neelands (1990) refers to as "voices in the head" (p.58).

Next, the same small groups created character outlines using what Neelands (1990, p.11) refers to as the "role on the wall" convention. These outlines were written down on white paper "bodies" similar to the chalk outlines one sees of murder victims on television. Mary-Ellen had had some of her students draw and cut these out ahead of time

The strategy or convention that seemed to create the greatest stress for Mary-Ellen was working with "teacher-in-role" (Morgan & Saxton, 1987, Neelands, 1990, Booth, 1994). Mary-Ellen, in the role of an investigative reporter, put the various characters who had been involved with the protagonist on the "hot seat" (Neelands, 1990, p.28; Booth, 1994, p.64). She had chosen a name for herself (Morning Star) and introduced me as the Editor-in-chief of the newspaper who was attending the meeting to monitor her work and possibly select some other "cub reporters" for jobs with the newspaper. All of the students who were not in role on the "hot-seat" were those cub reporters.

Mary-Ellen mentioned later that she was very nervous about taking on a role for the first time in front of the students. She said it felt like a performance and she always was nervous before a performance. This was another example of the different places on the process/performance continuum that Mary-Ellen and I inhabited. I had never considered my work with "teacher-in-role" as a performance before this point but upon reflection I decided that, in some respects, that was just what it was.

The closing episode of the drama (December 16, 1997) involved students writing up a human interest article for the newspaper that would communicate their perspectives on the serious nature of gang-related deaths among teenagers. The written work produced by the students was extremely powerful in terms of the depth of emotion they expressed. Many of their references within the reports were to moments that had occurred on the "hot seat" when they had been cub reporters and characters who figured in the life of the young boy who was murdered.

I was able to be present for every class during Mary-Ellen's work with 9C since I was able to adjust my student-teacher supervision around her class times with these students during the first week of the cycle and had finished my supervision responsibilities for the last two weeks of classroom action. We worked in the school's drama room when students were working on and creating the tableaux but went back to the classroom for the "teacher-in-role" and "hot seating" work. Tuesday mornings provided the best opportunity for group work since Mary-Ellen had two English language arts periods scheduled back to back with this group. She did not meet with them at all on Mondays.

Mary-Ellen shared the drama room space with one other teacher in the school and was able to schedule about half the instructional blocks for this first action cycle in this room. It had a raised stage with curtains (although these were never used), a carpeted floor and no desks. All the tableaux were presented on the stage in the chronological order of events that occurred on the night of the murder. The other groups of students participated as audience members during each group's performance of their tableau. Mary-Ellen stressed audience manners and invited students to comment on the depictions of events in each tableau. She often suggested ways that students might present themselves visually to enhance the "picture" that was created. I realized that I would not have paid the close attention to visual detail that Mary-Ellen paid. Her performance-oriented teaching background was evident whenever students shared their work with each other but it seemed that she was able to challenge them to strive for a much higher level of realism than I know

I would have expected from them. I began to see that my process-oriented stance focused much more on the students' language and ideas. Mary-Ellen challenged her students to a fully embodied representation of the dramatic reality. I realized, during this first action research cycle, that I had a lot to learn from Mary-Ellen.

Mary-Ellen seemed to gain a great deal of confidence from her initial work with integrating process drama strategies into her English language arts program. She realized, I think, that working with process drama in English language arts was only slightly different from the work she had been doing with students in more formal Drama classes. The main difference was that she was using drama to enhance students' engagement with literature and to prepare them to respond in writing to that literature through drama. Her busy schedule, however, prevented us from initiating another collaboratively planned action cycle until March of 1998. I did have another opportunity to visit Mary-Ellen's classroom in February, however. This time I observed an instructional sequence that Mary-Ellen had planned and initiated on her own.

Mary-Ellen had been using drama in her English language arts program for several years in terms of one particular instructional strategy that she shared with me in February. She had often asked her students to write and perform monologues based on characters from a short story within the framework of their English language arts program. The story she selected for the 8B students to work on in February was about a family who were dealing with the mother's nervous collapse. The story was "U are Part of Us" by Patricia Hancock and was taken from the anthology, *In Context*, a school-system recommended text for this grade level. Mary-Ellen decided that this year she would ask the students to work in groups and present tableaux with inner dialogue as an extension of their usual monologue presentations.

Mary-Ellen described how she was setting it all up to Carol and me at our February collaborative meeting

M: And the kids are now doing monologues -- we brainstormed a whole list of *dramatis personae* -- I did examples of tableau right in the classroom -- I did

an example of bringing a tableau to life -- so I taught the eights about tableaux without going into the drama room--

L: You didn't go to the drama room?

M: No, I just did it in the classroom. And we did the brainstorm and there was no way I could take them to the drama room at that point. So I thought just do it in the class and we did -- and the kids thought it was kind of neat to do it in the classroom. I've told them that their performances would be in the drama room. So what we talked about -- what a monologue was, what a tableau was, and what internal dialogue was. And then I said you have three options here -- and that took some explaining for them to get. I said "You can write a monologue based on -- coming from any one of the characters that you mentioned. And of course they listed the characters in the story and then they went beyond that and they started listing other people. The nurse, the doctor, the neighbours -- to whom Mikey delivers the newspapers -- Jim's boss, Alan's friends who are nameless in the story -- Kathleen's friends who have names but we don't know anything about them -- the family doctor who comes in and says "Jim we're going to have to take her to the hospital because she won't stop crying." -- the client that was supposed to be coming for dinner but Jim had to cancel when he gets a phone call from his kids saying "Dad we need you at home." They brainstormed a whole lot of very interesting people. Oh -- the lady in the bed next to Mom.

C: Oh -- neat--

M: And I said "You can give her a name or you can just have her the lady in the bed -- or lady in bed #2." So they had this whole list of *dramatis personae* and they had the option to 1) do just a monologue -- so they would just write the monologue and they would perform the monologue -- but they wouldn't have to memorize it -- they could read it dramatically -- or -- 2) monologue plus tableau -- so the monologue is going on but in the background you see this frozen image and the frozen image relates somehow to the monologue--

C: That's neat--

L: Okay!!

M: Step 3 -- if they wish to go this route -- they do their monologue, they have their tableau -- I mean they've been playwright -- they've created this home right on the stage -- the tableau is frozen -- they finish their monologue -- the tableau counts three and then it comes to life with an internal dialogue and then that's it.

C: Wow.

M: I mean there were three levels that they could approach. Some of them have opted just for the monologue -- although I think I talked one kid today into including a tableau. I'm going to push and pull some more tomorrow -- getting them to go beyond the monologue. Spent quite a bit of time today talking about what kinds of questions -- as playwright -- do they need to ask themselves about the characters--

(Collaborative Meeting #4 - pp. 8-9)

This excerpt from the transcript of the fourth collaborative planning meeting demonstrates Mary-Ellen's understanding of how process strategies could be integrated into her existing instructional practice. It also demonstrates how Carol appreciated hearing about Mary-Ellen's work.

I attended four classes with the Grade 8B class in February. They had already written their monologues and had been working with their small groups before I became involved in observing their work. My role in this action cycle was almost completely as an observer and as a learner. Students were using costumes, props, lighting, set pieces and even some make-up. All the sharing of work was done from the stage of the drama room so this work was very close to the theatrical performance end of the drama continuum. The monologues were rehearsed the first week I was observing the class and presented the next week. Mary-Ellen and the students discussed each monologue after it was rehearsed on stage and offered suggestions and comments. There was no discussion during the polished performances since Mary-Ellen completed a written evaluation of each student's monologue performance. On February 23 (after the last of the four classes I'd observed) she commented to me that she wasn't entirely happy with the evaluation checklist she had used but that she did need to mark them on their work.

Mary-Ellen's final action cycle in March differed from the other two in that I became more, rather than less, involved in the planning of instruction. This was exactly the reverse of what happened in Carol's classroom. The reason for the reversal revolved around Mary-Ellen's commitments in other areas and the feelings of stress that she was experiencing. On March 2, 1998, I wrote in my research journal about the phone conversation that had me doubting there would even be a third action cycle in Mary-Ellen's classroom.

> I just got off the phone from talking to Mary-Ellen. I didn't know if we would be planning or not so I had the tape recorder ready just in case but the conversation went so fast that I never did get the chance to turn it on. I do feel that the content of the conversation was important enough to be recorded right away. We have, I think, hit the wall of how much Mary-Ellen can handle before the end of March. She is doing report cards right now and will be busy with those all week. She hasn't had time to plan any drama to go with *The Proof* and has only two weeks after this week before she goes to Greece (end of March break) so our window of opportunity is narrowing.
>
> I did describe the organizing structure I thought might work with her idea of doing a trial as a follow-up to the story. I suggested creating role cards for the characters in the story (on 3 X 5 file cards) with a description of the role and that character's attitude towards the witch trial -- i.e. is the woman guilty or not guilty of witchcraft. I suggested that the students could generate other roles, also to be

written on role cards, and then all the students could choose a role for the trial from the deck of cards (not necessarily the role they had created). I mentioned that perhaps we would only take one forty minute period for the trial since time was getting short. I thought writing activities might be a simulated journal entry the day before the trial began and perhaps another one after the trial ended. I also suggested a letter written by the character to someone else some time in the future, remembering what had happened at the trial.

Mary-Ellen did not comment on this idea. I could tell she was really tired and stressed and picked up on her feeling of being overwhelmed. I told her I was getting a feeling that perhaps she was ready to call it quits on doing any more drama before the end of the research data collection. She confirmed that she really was doubtful that she would be able to work much in at this point.

(Research Journal, March 2, 1998)

At this point I recorded a brief conversation we had about the writing students had done in response to "U Are Part of Us" and then we talked again about upcoming plans.

I also suggested that she not worry about the drama at all this week and we would talk on the weekend and she could give me her decision with no pressure from me to do any more if she didn't feel she could handle it. I did mention that I had my students set up with a book fair next Tuesday morning in case I needed to be at the school (that would be March 10th). I told her if she wanted me to, I could set up the role cards for the courtroom drama so she didn't have to worry about it. She said she had asked the librarian to pull some information on the Salem witch trials off the Internet for the students so that they could do some research. Her idea was to have them create a market scene using tableaux perhaps. But, she said, she was just too swamped to do anything with it right now. The students have started on the story with questions to answer, etc.

We decided to talk on the weekend and she will know by then if she can find any more time to work on drama ideas for *The Proof*. I am torn between wanting to see more drama in her classroom and feeling a sympathetic need just to let it go so that the pressure will be off her shoulders. She sounds so tired and stressed right now. She thanked me for being understanding and I remarked that I had a pretty clear picture of the pressure cooker she was operating in -- that teachers are operating in. Is it unrealistic to expect tired and overworked teachers to innovate and be creative? I'm pretty sure that it is not only unrealistic -- it is downright unfair. What does this mean to the university researcher? What ethical responsibility does someone in my position have to address these issues in school/university partnership research? These are questions that deserve further exploration and reflection -- not just in the area of educational drama in the English language arts but right across the curriculum and right across the elementary/junior high spectrum of education.

(Research Journal, March 2, 1998)

This entry demonstrates how much I had invested emotionally in my research partners and how aware I was becoming of the stresses faced by classroom teachers. The eventual result of this conversation was that Mary-Ellen took the role card plan and the materials I had created around possible moments that led up to the events of the story and used my

plan with the students. She expressed how she felt about doing this at our final collaborative meeting in April.

> M: And you saved my a-- with the Grade 8's. I mean I was too tired.
> L: I know you were.
> M: I was ready to -- I was finished -- There wasn't anything left -- to be creative. I knew I wanted to do something -- but I didn't know what I wanted to do. So when you presented those -- what do you call those things?
> L: Role cards--
> M: Role cards -- I just thought "Isn't this wonderful." I didn't have to be creative -- I didn't have to do anything. She just -- and it was so much fun and I just wished I didn't have to be a teacher -- I could be a student and do this stuff too. It was wonderful -- you freed me right up -- and it's in my notes -- You took an enormous weight off my shoulders. I wanted to do it -- I wanted to do it because I had promised you. I wanted to do it because I knew it was the right thing to do. I wanted to do it because I'd promised my students. I wanted to do it because it was a creative process that was valuable and I knew it was valuable. I was living up to my religious zeal -- but my physical and mental and emotional energy was spent -- was gone. And I felt -- at home, I said to my husband "I can't do this. I don't want to do this." And Earl said "Well call Linda and tell her you're not going to do this." And I would look at the phone and I would think "No -- maybe I'll feel better tomorrow. I'll do it -- I'll do it." And then when I'd get into the classroom I'd say to the kids, "Now we're going to be doing this drama." and the words would be out of my mouth and I'd be thinking "Why are you saying this? Why are you doing this to yourself? You silly twit. You just nailed the coffin shut. Now you have to -- You've got to do it. Now where am I going to come up with the ideas." Then Linda calls and says "How about this?" and I'm thinking "Thank you, thank you, thank you."
>
> (Collaborative Meeting #5 - p. 21-22)

I experienced a great deal of emotional and professional satisfaction from being able to provide Mary-Ellen with some help at this point in her school year. The role cards -- Neelands (1990) calls these "prepared roles" (p.45) -- worked very well with the students. As I watched Mary-Ellen put the plan we had talked about collaboratively (but that I had polished and refined in written form) into practice with the students, I realized how much trust we had developed over a period of nine months since we were both students together in Dr. Neelands' summer school class. And I began to realize what collaborative action research "as a living practice" (Carson & Sumara, 1997) could give to teachers and to the university researchers who worked with them -- both professionally and personally.

Where are we going? Where have we been?: The Process of Reflection

One quality of the "three-way" collaborative relationship that developed during the research study was the degree of openness to each other's ideas and opinions that developed over time. Fullan (1991) emphasizes how important a quality this is when educators are trying to effect changes at the classroom level:

> ...innovators need to be open to the realities of others: sometimes because the ideas of others will lead to alterations for the better in the direction of change, and sometimes because the others' realities will expose the problems of implementation that must be addressed and at the very least will suggest where one should start (p.96)

I had decided, in light of the "reflectivity-activity dilemma" (Knight et al, 1992) that I could not leave opportunities for reflection to chance. Even though I had let go of trying to rigidly structure our collaborative meetings according to the Kemmis and McTaggert (1988) action research cycle during the fall term, I continued to jot down questions for our collaborative meetings that would cause us to reflect on the process of the research and what meanings we were constructing from our classroom experiences. Once we decided to do our action planning in dyads and use our three-way collaborative meetings for reflection, both teachers willingly accepted the opportunity to talk about what happened and compare their classroom experiences of integrating educational drama strategies into their language arts programs.

I discovered, however, that reflection could happen outside of our collaborative meetings as well as inside them. Because Carol and I had more opportunities to talk immediately after classroom sessions, we discovered many opportunities for reflection and meaning-making on a daily basis. One particularly exciting example of what these reflective moments could give us occurred in an after-school discussion on February 26, 1998.

> Carol talked a little about the "many surprises" that happen when she is experimenting with this work and I commented that this is why some teachers quit doing or avoid doing drama -- because they don't like surprises. We talked about finding the moments in a story that lend themselves to drama. Carol said she wasn't sure where to stop and do some drama and I commented that finding the moments came with experience. That the drama thinking developed over time. But

> I realized as I was talking that there is a way to pin it down more specifically. You look for the moments where the story could go either way -- the places where the outcome is uncertain -- the moments of choice. And then you let the students make the choices in their drama. As I put this into words, Carol responded that this was a very helpful formula. We came up with the term "visual predictions" to describe these moments and decided we liked that term a lot since it relates to spoken predictions in a parallel way.
>
> Carol did reflect that perhaps the first stopping point today didn't give the students enough choices and that was why their depictions were "surface". Carol is so good at analyzing her own teaching. It makes me feel freer to offer suggestions without feeling like I'm being critical. She's chosen excellent stories for drama -- all with lots of potential for students to use their imaginations and create new possibilities for story characters.
>
> (Research Journal, February 26, 1998)

At our fifth collaborative meeting, Carol referred to this moment as a "crystallization" of her understanding of what process drama was all about. Norris (1995) characterizes these moments which become turning points in a person's understanding as "epiphanies" (p.286). Carol's epiphany moved her from a place where she was imposing drama strategies on stories and poems without knowing just where to do it or why she was doing it to a place where she understood drama's potential to unfold the "what if..?" moment in children's imaginations. Her new awareness became very evident in the type of planning and teaching she did during the remainder of her second action phase.

Mary-Ellen and I did not become involved in as many "on the spot" reflective discussions as Carol and I did. The reason may have had something to do with the fact that she was coming from a much more extensive experiential base with drama and had many of the understandings that Carol achieved during the research process already in place. It may have also related to the other stresses she was experiencing: she was so busy trying to meet a variety of obligations and commitments that she didn't have as much time to stop and reflect on the process unless it was in response to a specific question.

She did generate an insight about her own instructional practice as an English language arts teacher during our January 15th one-on-one meeting that could be characterized as an epiphany.

> M: You made the comment in your notes about how could an inexperienced teacher do this. And then you made a comment about strategies. And I've made comments back to you on this that I can read to you. As I read I was

stopping and going back to your cover page and scribbling on that and making references back to your page numbers. But you made a comment about -- you know -- my use of strategies. And I made a comment back saying "I'm not even aware that I'm doing it."

L: No, it's reflex.

M: It's instinctual. It's not even thought. I'm going "Did I do that? Gee, wasn't that clever of me! [laughter] Gee, I didn't know I did that. Did I make that reference back? Did I make that connection? I didn't know I did that." And, you know, when you're trying to work with student teachers you probably do -- You do -- you do that sort of thing all the time and how much of it do you intellectualize when you're debriefing a student teacher? I just wonder how much of it, after 24 years, has become so automatic that it doesn't -- I'm not sure what part of my mind it exists in -- Whether I'm -- when somebody observes me that they see these things. I'm just thinking of the student teachers. And how do you -- Oh this is a strategy that I use -- I don't think of it. I mean even the counting off. You make a comment about my counting off and getting them organized that way and this is an effective strategy. And -- it was just an automatic -- this is the best way to get them organized quickly. I'll just count them off. But why I do it -- I mean what are the educational values and the educational, pedagogical reasons that I'm doing it. I've long since lost that connection?

(January 15 Meeting with Mary-Ellen, p. 4)

This insight exemplifies the process of teachers making their "personal practical knowledge" explicit in such a way that they are empowered to make changes and take control of their own instructional practice (Connelly & Clandinin, 1988). The research process provided Mary-Ellen with the opportunity to achieve these kinds of insights about herself as a teacher, primarily within the context of our collaborative meetings. Her schedule afforded her little time to address reflective concerns and questions outside of this context.

Many of the insights, comments and reflections both teachers expressed relate directly to the thematic explication contained in the next chapter and, for this reason, are not included in this discussion of methodology. The action research process, however, created a pressure for all three of us to reflect on our practice in a conscious and deliberate way. This pressure, combined with the active support we gave each other throughout the course of the research study, created a context for the kind of educational change Fullan (1991) explains is possible for teachers:

> ...small groups of people begin and, if successful, build momentum... Pressure without support leads to resistance and alienation; support without pressure leads to drift or waste of resources (p.91).

Our collaborative relationship contained both pressure and support for all of us. We all expressed our satisfaction with the results of the process we had undergone at our final meeting. Carol expressed hers in relation to my role and to her own insights.

> C: For me -- I'm content.
> L: Really? You thought it worked?
> C: Oh yeah. Oh yeah -- I thought it all worked because of what I said at the very beginning of our whole evening tonight -- of how the crystallization of it worked for me and how I can apply that in my classroom -- what it means to be on the edge and what would happen if-- What does that phrase really mean-- "what would happen if?"
> L: Okay--
> C: So that worked. And -- if you were a different person -- somebody else coming in as researcher -- I would have to get to know that person.
> L: Is there something about -- okay--
> C: The strengths that you have -- and what I read from you and what I work with -- made it work this spring. Does that make sense at all? As opposed to whoever else I could get as a consultant? It would depend on who that person was--
>
> (Collaborative Meeting #5 - p. 18)

Mary-Ellen felt that the research had opened a door for her own academic pursuits and research possibilities. We learned at our fifth collaborative meeting that she had been granted a sabbatical leave from the school system and was returning to university to work on her Master's of Education degree.

> M: What this project has done is confirmed in my own mind the kind of work that I want to do next year.
> L: Okay--
> M: It has cemented it and I feel a greater need and desire to carry on with your work basically -- at the secondary level.
> L: Okay.
> M: And I'm excited about that. That's really -- that's been very important to me. I probably -- Isn't it interesting how Fate has a way of doing with us what she will? And this seemed to be fated. Like the Neelands course was fated last summer -- that I'd take that. Meeting you was fated. Volunteering for this -- I never thought about that, you know, Linda? You said "Who would like to?" and I should listen to this intuitive voice more often -- it just popped out of my mouth -- "Oh, I do." And I never thought about the commitment in terms of time. I came home and I said "Oh, I'm going to be involved in this research project." And Earl said "God -- what do you need to take that on for?" [everybody laughs] My husband, devil's advocate -- um -- "Haven't you had enough?" he said. And I said, "Oh it won't be that much work." And he just rolled his eyes and said "Oh, right."
> L: Yeah -- he knew--
> M: Yeah -- but -- So it almost seemed to be fated. And then applying for the sabbatical -- getting the sabbatical--
> C: Oh, I didn't hear this--

M: Yeah--
C: Oh, congratulations -- next year?
M: Thank you! Yeah--
L: She's going to be doing her Master's
M: I'm going to be doing my Master's--
C: Oh, neat.
M: I'm going to be doing my Master's on using drama as teaching tool at the secondary level.

(Collaborative Meeting #5, p. 24)

And with her characteristic sense of humour, Mary-Ellen reversed the usual question and answer pattern we had followed at our many meetings and threw my question back at me.

M: How was it for you?
L: How was it for me?
M: It was good for us -- was it good for you? [more laughter]
L: It was good for me. It was good for me. I think -- you know one of the things that's been really neat for me -- is I've done lots of -- I haven't worked with kids for a long time. I've done lots of work with education students and I've done inservice, professional development with teachers and so on -- And that's always fun but what was really good for me was working with kids -- Because that's really what I'm talking to teachers and pre-service teachers -- education students -- about -- you know? This works with kids -- And you sort of get to a point when you've been away from the classroom for awhile when you begin to wonder if you're lying. You begin to wonder if it really does? You begin to wonder--
M: Am I remembering it correctly?
L: Yeah -- I -- Yeah -- that's the thing -- And I think am I taking the work that I did when I was a classroom teacher and blowing it up into something glorious that it really wasn't at all -- And if you took me back in time -- you know I'd say "Oh -- okay -- I guess -- it wasn't quite as picture perfect as I thought it was." And it wasn't -- obviously -- I mean -- learning -- it's a messy business. And things don't happen just the way they're supposed to. But I saw some really neat stuff in all those classrooms. In your classroom and in your classroom with the kids and that was really rewarding to me -- Because I really do believe passionately in this work. I think we've got to start giving kids more opportunities to use their imaginations. That's what they're going to need. Their creativity -- their imaginations -- self-confidence -- all those kinds of things. The world's changing so fast. They can memorize facts until they're coming out their ears and next year there'll be a whole different set of facts. So it was great working with both of you people. I thought you were great. I feel like I really lucked in -- I really do -- because you've both been really good to work with. I've really enjoyed it. Yeah -- that's how it was for me.
C: Wonderful.

(Collaborative Meeting #5, pp. 29-30)

It wasn't always "wonderful" but it was always interesting and challenging. I believed, when we met for our final collaborative meeting in April, that we had each and all grown and changed as educators. And that, after all, was what the research project was all about.

Data Analysis

I engaged in an ongoing constant comparison and re-reading of transcripts, field notes and other data beginning in January of 1998 (Bogden & Biklen, 1992) and I immersed myself in this process when the data collection phase of the research study ended in March of 1998. I presented my analytic possibilities to both teachers in our February and April collaborative meetings so that Carol and Mary-Ellen could conduct member checks (Guba, 1981, p.85) of my elaboration of thematic categories on an ongoing basis. Since I had prepared a "work in progress" paper for a research conference in May of 1998, I provided both Carol and Mary-Ellen with copies of this paper and invited them to respond to my most recent thematic analysis at our April 27th meeting. They provided me with feedback regarding my identification of research themes, feedback which is incorporated into the thematic analysis in the next chapter.

Conclusion

I have described and summarized the unfolding and changing nature of our collaborative action research project from its inception in July of 1997 to its conclusion in April of 1998. This discussion has focused on:

1. the selection of participants from students enrolled in the summer session course, International Studies in Process Drama, taught by Dr. Jonothan Neelands,
2. the process of reconnaissance where participants recounted their educational experiences, values and goals for the research project,
3. the data sources used to document the progress of the research and participants' response to that progress,
4. the nature of planning within the context of our specific research goals and purposes,
5. the classroom events that represented our collaborative and individual instructional planning put into action,

6. structured and unstructured opportunities for reflection and construction of meaning in the contextually specific location of each teacher's school culture.

7. the conduct of data analysis and teachers' contribution to the analysis process.

I return to the overarching metaphor of collaborative research as collective creation to summarize and close this discussion of the research methodology. Goffin (1995) explains the characteristics of collective creation that make it so satisfying for the participating players:

> The collective creation relies on a company of performers and theatre craftspeople skilled in many different tasks. Ideally, each member can function in several traditional roles, such as actor, stage carpenter and playwright. The work is extremely demanding for every member of the collective, yet the result is very fulfilling for all involved (p.195).

Carol, Mary-Ellen and I played many different roles and engaged in a variety of tasks related to planning, teaching and reflecting throughout the course of this research study. The work demanded much from all of us but especially from both teachers whose schedules and other commitments had to accommodate space for research too. Mary-Ellen summarized our sense of fulfillment most succinctly when she said. "It was good for us -- was it good for you too?" My answer was a resounding and unqualified "Yes".

CHAPTER FOUR

COLLECTIVE CREATION

Introduction

In traditional theatre, the actor uses his or her physical, emotional and intellectual resources to create an embodied interpretation of the playwright's singular voice as represented in the playscript. In collective creation, on the other hand, the actors combine their own individual voices and understandings to create a collaborative production which they believe represents the voices and understandings of all the members of the collective. When one is asked, as a member of a collective, to explain how the group of players created the work or to interpret the meaning of that work for an outside audience, one must communicate clearly to that audience that one's explanation and interpretation should be suspect since work created by the collective should be explained and interpreted by the collective.

My explanation and interpretation of the collective creation which was this research study should also be suspect since I am speaking through the lens of my own subjective experience. Denzin (1989) offers one method to temper the inevitability of subjective interpretation:

> Our texts must always return to and reflect the words persons speak as they attempt to give meaning and shape to the lives they lead. The materials of the biographical method resolve, in the final analysis, into the stories persons tell one another (p.81)

I will attempt, therefore, to echo my own subjective interpretation with the interpretations and reflections of my two collaborative partners as represented in the stories we told each other within the contexts of collaborative meetings and classroom action. Student voices and stories are also included to deepen and enrich the reader's understanding of our collective experience.

Uncovering Themes:

My search for themes began with three successive attempts to code and categorize the data generated in collaborative meetings, in two-way planning conversations with

Mary-Ellen and Carol (on the telephone and in the schools), and in classroom interactions. In my first attempt in February of 1998, I established categories according to interactions that took place in the school context and interactions that occurred in collaborative meetings. This system of categorization was too broad and provided little direction or clarification in detecting research themes. My second categorization system included categories for resources, relationships and responses to the research process and classroom action. This structure enabled me to revisit the data from another perspective and provided new insights and thematic possibilities but was still limited in its scope. The final structuring of data categories relied on the Kemmis and McTaggert (1988) action research cycle and included categories for a) planning, b) action, c) data collection, and d) reflection and response. This structure provided the most effective approach to examining and exploring the data but left me feeling dissatisfied with its explanatory power.

At this point I realized that I was attempting to impose one comprehensive structure on the unfolding nature of this research project when I was, in fact, dealing with three very different stories within one research study. There was the story of my work with Carol and her students, the story of my interaction with Mary-Ellen and her students, and the story of our collaborative group. This realization enabled me to combine my previous analysis with an exploration of each of these stories. I uncovered themes that were common to all three stories, although the themes played out differently in each context.

There are, of course, many individual stories that could be told, but these are not mine to tell. Mary-Ellen's personal experience of the research needs to be told by Mary-Ellen. Only Carol can give voice to her own personal response to the process we experienced together. Each of the students in each of the classroom groups also has a story to tell of his or her own experience. Of the individual stories, the personal stories, I am able to speak only for myself. My own experience of the process comprises the fourth research story.

Since the uncovered themes emerge differently in the stories contained within this research study, I will begin with a brief description of the seven themes which were identified as influencing the growth and understandings of the research participants. These themes will then be discussed and illustrated within the context of each story.

Statement of Themes

At our final collaborative meeting in April of 1998, Mary-Ellen, Carol and I decided together that the research study had been a successful and positive experience for all of us. Our discussion on that evening helped me to re-identify some of the influences, both positive and negative, that sculpted our collective creation into a form that provided us all with feelings of satisfaction and fulfillment. I traced these influences through the data we had generated over the seven month period and revisited the memos I had recorded through my ongoing process of constant comparison (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992, p.72) to arrive at the seven themes which follow:

- **Accountability**: From the Latin root meaning "to reckon", this theme refers to "a state of being accountable or answerable to a trust". A further definition suggests that being accountable also means "being liable to be called to account or answerable to superior" (Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1980, p.7). Within the context of this research study, this theme refers to those influences which teachers and researcher value and consider to be important professional and personal responsibilities which ethically must be honoured.

- **Constraint:** From the Latin, *constringo*, meaning "to bind together", this theme encompasses factors which teachers and researcher felt were both internally and externally imposed. Webster's (1980) further defines constraint as a "feeling of reserve or being kept in check; confinement" (p.182). Factors such as available time and space are subsumed within the external aspects of this theme. External constraint differs from accountability in that the limitations of external constraint were neither valued nor considered necessary by the participants. The key internal

constraints experienced by all three collaborative group members were the feelings that kept them from taking risks or experimenting with new approaches.

- **Authority:** The term authority derives from the Latin *auctor* , meaning "to increase or produce authority, power or right to command or act"; power derived from opinion, respect or esteem (Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1980, p.56). This theme includes people, structures or texts which teachers, researcher and students refer to when justifying opinions, actions or responses to classroom events.
- **Creativity:** From the Sanskrit word *kri* , meaning "to make" and from the Latin *creo* which means "to bring about, cause or produce" (Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1980, p.201), this theme includes influences which teachers, researcher and students credit with inspiring the creation of new and original artifacts, texts (usually lesson and unit plans) or artistic/dramatic representations.
- **Concern:** Webster's (1980) defines concern (from the Latin *concerno* meaning to mix as in a sieve) as "to affect the interest of; to take or have an interest in; interested, engaged or anxious" (p.172). This theme encompasses all instances where teachers, researcher or students demonstrate an interest in the welfare of other participants engaged in the research experience. Instances of concern are expressed through words or through action in both collaborative meetings and classroom contexts.
- **Connections:** From the Latin, *connexum*, meaning "and to bind", connection means "to join or unite; to fasten together" (Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1980, p.179). All instances where research participants make links between prior knowledge, prior experience, text, and present action or reflection in order to generate new insights or ideas or justify and explain behavior are included within the theme of connections.

- **Praxis:** Derived from the Greek *prasso*, meaning "I do", the dictionary definition of "praxis" includes "practice or discipline for a specific purpose, as to acquire a specific art" (Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary, 1980, p.651). The Carr and Kemmis (1986) definition of "praxis" is more descriptive of its use as a theme within the context of this research study: "informed action which, by reflection on its character and consequences, reflexively changes the 'knowledge base' which informs it" (p.33). All instances where teachers, researcher or students articulate or show through action a new understanding which appears to emerge from integrating new information, ideas or opinions discussed within the context of the research study are considered to be instances of praxis.

This brief discussion of themes has established the focus for the stories of collaboration and growth which follow. Each theme assumes a different level of priority within each teacher's classroom experience and within the context of the collaborative group as well as within my own story. The presentation of themes within each story is therefore ordered contextually.

<u>With Carol in Planning and Action</u>

In the early stages of our collaborative journey together, Carol made frequent references to herself as the "greenhorn of the group". She was very aware that both Mary-Ellen and I had much more experience with drama than she did and frequently mentioned this fact in our meetings. Not surprisingly, the theme of **authority** emerges as one of Carol's most important issues in both collaborative meetings and the school-based conversations. During our first collaborative meeting in October, Carol expressed her sense of struggle:

> C: And that's fun -- but you know that skill -- and I'm still struggling with -- you know -- knowing all the skills -- I'm not discouraged. I'm just saying I don't have the lingo, I don't have the tools yet -- I don't have -- (Collaborative Meeting #1 - p.17)

But Carol was very eager to learn "the lingo" and began to use the drama terminology in collaborative planning conversation from the very beginning. In discussing her first selection of literature for her first action plan, she emphasized how important it was to her that she master the discourse of drama as a necessary step in establishing her own authority to teach with drama in her English language arts program:

> C: So then -- in our next step -- of using this larger one that's in the book -- in the anthology -- And now this is all broken up into tableaus and all these things that I'm learning here. Get these definitions down -- pair dialogues, etc.
> L: (from far away) We can talk about those --
> C: Sure. So that breaks up now -- the thinking -- the analytical skills -- of getting into the character -- what the character could be thinking, could be doing, could have experienced before this particular play -- or will experience after the play's over. (Collaborative Meeting #2 - p.2)

An examination of Carol's conversation throughout the research process reveals that she perceived me as "the expert" or "the professional" in relation to educational drama. She was very interested in finding out how I would integrate drama into a classroom program:

> Carol and I debriefed for a few minutes in the staff room. She asked what my philosophy was about using drama -- would I use it very intensively in a unit or weave it in and out occasionally when the moment presented itself. I explained that I see drama as a teaching strategy as well as a subject in its own right and I think the best way to incorporate it into the curriculum is to use it as part of the teaching repertoire -- mainly in language arts but in other subjects too. (Research Journal, November 13, 1997)

Carol retained her authority role with her students but was very willing to share this role with me as well, especially during our first action cycle when I was teaching a demonstration unit with her eighteen Grade four, five and six students. We were able to talk freely about classroom management issues from the very beginning of the research process:

> I went out to the playground to talk with Carol. Friday is her supervision day. She was concerned about intervening in the management. I guess Nicholas was stirring up some criticism in some of the tableaux work and also when we went back to write. This won't be an issue for Carol and me I don't think as we can share management quite comfortably it seems. She mentioned her process with Lara (the student teacher) who wasn't there today, but we decided our situation was different. Carol mentioned she sees me as a "visiting professional" so this is a new one we hadn't thought about or talked about. It seems to be working out quite comfortably so far though. (Research Journal, November 7, 1997)

Although Carol and I were comfortable with sharing classroom management responsibilities, we did have to make our division of authority very explicit to the students during the first action cycle:

> Carol took over just before recess. An interesting thing happened. She was giving the class directions about what to do with their duotangs and a couple of girls came up to me to ask me questions while she was talking to the class. I just said "Mrs. H_____ is talking now" and stepped aside. We talked about it in the staff room at recess and decided maybe they were confused about who was in charge. Next time I will very obviously hand the class back over to Carol so we don't confuse them with too many teachers all at once. (Research Journal, November 13, 1997)

Carol took responsibility for all of the teaching during her second action research cycle in February and March of 1998 and although she continued to perceive me as an educational drama "authority" throughout the entire research study process, she was increasingly willing to make decisions as an authority in her own right. I made a conscious effort to withdraw some of my own authority during Carol's first attempts to teach with drama:

> Carol asked me to evaluate her work. I said that I would be happy to comment on the drama sequence and what I might have done but I'm uncomfortable with the idea of evaluating a fellow teacher. I explained that I see myself still as a teacher and would like to approach it as a peer -- "critical friend" -- rather than as an evaluator. She made reference to my supervision of student teachers and I suggested that the role there was quite different as evaluation is part of "the job". We did agree that I might frame it as "here's another possibility". I'm comfortable with that approach. (Research Journal, February 5, 1998)

By March Carol was beginning to feel confident in her own ability to make decisions and analyze her own teaching. Our reflective discussion at the school became a shared exploration of classroom events rather than an opportunity for me to critique Carol's use of drama strategies:

> Carol and I met after school to debrief. Carol recognized that there was a lot of repetition again and no opportunities for students to create something new. We talked about the problems created by a focus on props. Many of the students just stood there doing nothing this week where they had shown a lot of physical involvement in showing Jimmy Jet turning into the TV set last week. The costumes/props were doing their work for them. I talked a bit about the difference between theatrical presentation where you pull out all the stops to create an illusion of reality for the audience with lights, costumes, props, sets, etc. but how, when your purpose is to explore the piece of literature (be it story or poem) to understand the characters and plot better, these elements can interfere with the students'

> concentration and involvement. We agreed that they had really wanted to create props (many had asked to do this) and it was a good idea to have let them have free reign but it was really not the kind of process drama lesson we've been working on. Carol recognizes all these things without any help from me. (Research Journal, March 12, 1998)

By mid-March, Carol was willing to view herself as an authority in planning drama strategies within the context of her English language arts program and I moved from a position of "expert" into a true collaborator:

> I am really excited about this. Carol really came up with all of this after I mentioned the title of the novel. It has some wonderful potential for symbolic work and I think this group of students is ready for symbolic work by now. She may phone me again but I think we've got next Thursday and Friday under control with a ten minute phone call and some collaborative brainstorming. (Research Journal, March 13, 1998)

At our last collaborative meeting, Carol shared how she had come to be perceived as an authority within her own school context:

> C: I see myself doing this in school -- school development day thing -- from my experience this year. Cause my principal's asked me to do that.
> L: Good.
> C: Of what we've done. What does this process drama mean? Some of the experiments that we've done.
> L: Good.
> M: Cast the bread upon the waters--
> C: Right -- you throw it out -- that's a good expression -- just give it a try. So I'm not going to be as other people. I'm just going to be who I am and from my reference point. But that's okay -- for a couple of hours -- that's okay. (Collaborative Meeting #5 -p.29)

One of the factors that helped Carol move from her perception of herself as a "greenhorn" to someone who felt confident about her own abilities to integrate drama into her classroom program, was her ability and willingness to make **connections.** Carol drew upon our shared experience in Dr. Neelands' summer school class for a variety of purposes. She used an event in the summer school class to explain why it would benefit her students to have me coming in as someone without preconceptions about how the students would behave:

> C: Cannot do and truly -- they're just -- Remember that movie clip of Neelands going in in some play in England and the little boy who was always the bully -- ?
> L: Oh yeah -yeah

> C: He was brought on as the victim this time or something I think was what it was -- role played what it was like to be the victim -- And then the one other scene where he was he was going around to each group to buy the fish or buy the gold and one little boy really held a dialogue and he was the one learning disabled or the ADD student -- whichever it was, I don't remember. And so you know, would I put that child as a booth seller -- maybe not -- you know? I might have done something different -- and with you coming in -- you know -- not knowing my students -- Go for it. (Collaborative Meeting #1 - p.18)

She stressed the importance of experience, both in the summer school class and with me in her classroom, as the primary influence in her growth as a teacher of drama:

> C: Because the experience, and the one-on-one and being in a classroom situation -- like Neelands' classroom last year was for my first experience -- and then having you as kind of my mentor this year -- was much more valuable than any textbook.
> M: Mmm hmm-
> C: It's just a nice resource and that will stimulate my brain in retrospect of the strategies. But the reality is the experience is what will carry me through and develop me. (Collaborative Meeting #5 - p.18)

Carol also drew on the summer school class experience for ideas when she was requesting me to demonstrate strategies in the first action cycle:

> Carol made a reference to the summer school class and the kinds of warm-ups we did for it. She wants to see how warm-ups lead into the context. I do have some that will work pretty well I think -- some of those concentration and focusing ones we used to do with creative drama -- especially since they're talking about the senses. (Research Journal, November 3, 1997)

Once Carol began to do her own planning in the second research cycle, she usually selected activities that she remembered doing in the summer school class:

> We brainstormed where would be a good place to break for a drama and ended up at the end of Chapter 5 when the children are hiding in the wardrobe before they go back to Narnia. I asked Carol if there were any other conventions or strategies we hadn't tried yet that she would like to try for this drama. Carol remembered the tombstone scene Jonothon Neelands did with us around the story "Yallery Brown". She asked what that was called and I tore off to get my Neelands book (*Structuring Drama Work*) and read out a number of structures to her (ritual, ceremony, caption making, etc.). We decided it wasn't as important what it was called as how we could use it with this novel. (Research Journal, March 13, 1998)

That Carol and I had shared the summer school experience as students together turned out to have unforeseen benefits when we were working collaboratively in the classroom context. During our final drama sequence with the students, the shared experience stood us in good stead:

> The students started working on their posters of the plaque on the lamppost as soon as the afternoon began. I wandered around and checked with a few groups. They seemed confused about how to interpret their plaques through movement. I guess the idea is pretty abstract for this age group. So I checked with Carol and suggested another spur of the moment idea. I said I would write a plaque and then we could model for the students how to interpret it through movement. Carol thought this was great so I wrote a short poem:
>
> The plaque that hangs upon this post
> Was put there by a witch's ghost
> To warn you to be very wary
> Cause someone in this land is SCARY!
>
> We went out into the hallway and interpreted it in about three minutes then came in and modeled the process for the students. We even got some applause. I realize how important the shared experience of Neelands' class last summer was here. Since we had both participated in this convention then, we could move right into our interpretation with no difficulty and make it work. (Research Journal, March 20, 1998)

Carol also established **connections** between the drama strategies she was using in her English language arts program and learning objectives she had for other subject areas within her classroom program. These connections allowed her to reason the inclusion of particular strategies:

> Carol joined me about 3:30 and we debriefed the work so far. I mentioned that I'd been teaching my 305 students about DRTA's just this morning so it was interesting to see the predicting and confirming going on for real! Carol talked about her reasons for choosing the robot activity. Students will be talking about mass production lines in Science and this ties very neatly to what the robots do in this story to retrieve and prepare the food. (Research Journal, February 5, 1998).

Since Carol made the connections between dramas done in English language arts and other subject areas explicit to the students as well, it was not surprising to see students make connections too, within the context of the drama work:

> Since they sat in their family groups, I went around the circle and asked each group to tell us who lived in their household and what kind of work they did. I'd said something about shoemakers as a possibility and there were a lot of shoemakers. Nicholas -- who was so resistant when we started this work -- came up with the most original occupation. He was a map maker. Carol told me afterwards that they talked about mapmaking in Social Studies.(Research Journal, November 20, 1997)

Carol used the connections she made to inform her classroom practice in a direct way and worked towards achieving moments of **praxis** throughout the course of the research study. At our final Collaborative Meeting she reflected upon how these moments emerged for her in the classroom:

C: But it doesn't mean anything until you've seen the strategies -- until you've practiced with these strategies -- until you've worked with real human beings at whatever age group you're working with. And then going back to the theory -- like you're always bouncing it off -- back and forth -- And then "Oh yeah -- that really makes sense -- what happened there--" (Collaborative Meeting #5 - p. 7)

The primary influence of **accountability** in Carol's planning and action appeared to relate to her sense of responsibility to covering the curriculum for her students. She made it clear from the beginning that she was embarking on this project to bring enjoyment and fun into her classroom program but that it could not interfere with her students' achievement of curriculum goals and objectives:

L: The strategies -- the conventions --
C: Right, the conventions -- then that's encouraging to me because I can see it implemented. So what did I like? I liked it all -- I haven't been discouraged with anything except that -- for me -- a little bit of taking time away from the curriculum -- Like I think we've spent a lot of time just on two items but that's okay in that we're really learning these strategies as a group -- as the children and teacher -- and that hopefully, next spring, then we'll be able to implement them quicker and more spur of the moment. (Collaborative Meeting #3 - p.22)

Carol reiterated the importance of meeting curriculum requirements at later meetings and emphasized that she believed in the importance of adhering to curriculum expectations:

C: Relating to what other teachers are going to relate to just like we do. We have tons of accountability to this curriculum -- we have got to get through these pages in this book -- We have got to teach -- You have nines [to Mary Ellen] -- I have sixes -- They have to go through provincials --
L: Yes -- damn--
C: And it's not all bad because you really are teaching across Alberta quality information to kids. I'm thinking of some my Grade 6 curriculum is quality stuff. I mean fractions and Ancient Greece. And if you're lackadaisical you don't have accountability -- it's going to slide through the cracks. Just like our meetings and our accountability to each other on whatever Monday night we picked -- forced us to get the job done.
L: Right--
C: So that's not all bad. (Collaborative Meeting #5, p.13)

The stress Carol placed on meeting curriculum requirements seemed to have its greatest influence on the length of time she was willing to spend working with one selection of literature. Although she said she appreciated the demonstration unit I taught in her classroom in November, she did not feel it was practical for her to spend as much time on two selections of literature as I had:

C: Not so intense as a workshop. This feels more like workshop. And it's good and we haven't lost their attention but I can't do that every week. What we're doing is not practical for me every week. So we need to be able to do the little snippets in -- (Collaborative Meeting #3 - p.22)

Carol's decision to integrate drama strategies with poems rather than stories related to her concern about not spending too much time with a single selection of literature.

Carol reflected that her accountability to curriculum and to communicating student achievement to parents had been affected by the amount of time she spent on the research project:

L: What about you, Carol?
C: Well mine is recording because I have implemented with triple grades and we have to do a lot of marking. And only real exams -- I mean I'm getting wise with my experience now -- exams and weekly quizzes and any kind of writing. You see I do more -- what you do -- [to Mary Ellen] You have to read lots and lots of writing consistently. And my writing won't be as often as I have them account to me -- that I want to see their writing. But -- it would be the recording. The being able to pull out of their books. Because they have quiz books, they have duotangs that they keep Math in -- pulling that up -- I get immediate feedback -- I have my little techniques of how I know if they've learned the concept and they raise their hand a certain way or give these little signals. So I know whether the concepts are getting across and I glance over their work as I go along -- but to pull it in and write it down. That's what I'm going to be doing after my PD days on Friday.
L: Record keeping.
C: Is record keeping. And implementing that so that we have averages for parent teacher conferences next Thursday and Friday.
L: So it's about marks?
C: The paperwork. I would say the teaching is the top priority so no matter what my teaching got in. My planning got in, my teaching got in -- the work got issued -- but like Mary Ellen's saying -- Being able to have a turn around time -- back to the kids wasn't as fast. But for me the record keeping, all the paper work. (Collaborative Meeting #4 - 38-39)

The theme of **constraint**, particularly external constraint, emerged in Carol's work as very closely tied to her accountability to the school program, to the students and to meeting the requirements of the curriculum. Carol infrequently mentioned external constraints as imposing unnecessary limits on her work in the research study. Even when she did recognize that school expectations were impinging on her scheduling of her second action research cycle, she treated these expectations with a positive attitude:

C: And that was it. And now we're going to supposedly finish but we have our spirit days this week which is a three day week this week. Just the middle of the winter Olympics -- focus on the Olympics. We're doing some other

> things around that -- do things as a whole school body instead of just classrooms. So -- we only teach maybe three subjects. Can't do it all-- But it was fun. And I think well received. (Collaborative Meeting #4 -p. 6)

She did mention that the constraint of space for drama was an issue for her during the second action cycle. I had used the French room at the school during my demonstration unit since there were no desks, and tables could be moved to the side to allow room for movement and action. Carol felt, however, that moving the students to another room for drama activities was not practical or realistic in terms of time:

> Carol suggested she wanted them to work in groups of 3 or 4 -- a much better idea from the time perspective. They will have to work together (cooperation-operation skills) to create the robot production line. I asked if they would move to the open space but Carol wanted to stay in the four corners of the classroom suggesting that this was more like "reality" which is very true. (Research Journal, February 5, 1998)

It was internal **constraint** that emerged most frequently as an issue for Carol, especially in the initial phases of the research process. She spoke at the first collaborative meeting about her feelings of fear about attempting to teach with drama:

> C: Yeah -- I'd say that's a very good description too -- I'm excited because there's some things now -- concrete -- and yet terrified too cause I'm so green -- (Collaborative Meeting #1, p.26)

When we talked together after Christmas about her response to the demonstration unit I taught in her classroom, these feelings emerged again and she explained them to me:

> C: Well I'd said definitely the positive part was seeing somebody who has this specialty -- ingrained in their blood -- I mean this is one of your interests -- you're doing your dissertation in this field. It's a field of interest for you -- what you're adept at -- and, in addition, have been in the curriculum and in the kids' level teaching -- being an elementary teacher years ago -- So that that part -- seeing you work with children -- with your strengths of how to look at a story -- just our little folk tales that we did -- was just more education for me -- more experience in an area that I'm not exposed to and have not been involved in -- in my teaching or in my personal life.
>
> L: Okay--
>
> C: Down side, of course, is still the fear -- insecurity on my part -- of thinking through just what you said tonight with the poetry. You've got to have some human element or fantasy element. There's got to be a conflict in a poem to make it work. It can't just be plays on puns or rhyming things -- there has to be a story embedded in there that you can flesh out.
>
> L: Yeah--
>
> C: And so those things that either come naturally to you or you have been trained in that so that you can see -- That's what I feel is an insecurity and the down

side of having somebody come in -- And then I look at myself and feel -- gosh -- yeah that's really good and -- can I do this? Can I really do this?

L: Okay--

C: And will I be able to keep developing this and not get discouraged and not -- Branch out more in whatever it takes to make process drama work in the afternoon curriculum in language arts. (Planning with Carol, January 19, 1998)

I realized, during this conversation, that the demonstration teaching role I had taken on in Carol's classroom might have acted to constrain as well as to inform Carol's instructional practice with process drama. As we talked further, I was able to explain my perspectives within a broader context than our three-person collaborative group:

L: So I need you -- I really need you to be real straight with me and not be intimidated by this drama expertise thing that's going on here. You know what I mean?

C: Because you're saying that there are so few of you that have that passion and would incorporate it into your curriculum anyway because that's the way you're wired. What you want to see happen is more of the Joe Blow kind of people using this stuff and feeling happy with it -- feeling comfortable with it and developing and growing with it. And -- true -- that's why I'm here. But because of my very limited experience -- that's why I see that what you do in my classroom -- and I admire and I'm jealous of the knowledge base that comes to you naturally -- in being able to work with these same eighteen kids that I'm working with. So that would be -- the scary part? the down side? The part that kind of holds you back a little -- It really isn't holding me back because I'm still willing to try. I'm just saying that it's an effort. It's an effort. (Planning with Carol, January 19, 1998)

Towards the end of the second action cycle, Carol's fears seemed to have dissipated. She had worked with process drama strategies in a variety of ways, had had some successes and some near successes in her classroom. She reflected on how the research process had allowed her to develop her confidence as a teacher of process drama and why that growth was so important to her:

C: So it still is pretty personal -- it's still at the personal level. How we grew personally. What we saw happen in some of the kids' eyes -- in their lives -- in the comments that they wrote for you on your paper -- But it's still just those kids and us. (Collaborative Meeting #5, p.29)

Carol's **concern** for her students' and for her collaborative partners' welfare and happiness emerged frequently in collaborative meetings and in classroom interactions. She often reassured me, in two-way conversations and in the classroom context, that my work in her classroom was a positive experience for her and for her students:

> After recess Carol began by welcoming me back to the classroom and the students gave me a round of applause. Very gratifying but they will probably find my role this time around to be much less direct as I expect to spend most of this cycle observing. Carol asked them to get out their duotangs and Carlene asked if they were going to do drama. [Note: Sure is nice to discover I remember the students' names!] Carol responded that today would be mostly reading but they would see how fast they got through the story. She suggested they would do "some visiting tomorrow". Carol spent a few minutes inviting students to remember what they did the last time I was there. Her exact words were, "What did we do in our adventure in the fall with Ms. Lang?" An adventure -- what a nice way to frame our past experiences. (Research Journal, February 5, 1998)

She seemed to sense when I was struggling with an issue and was quick to point out how my action in her classroom was supportive to her:

> Carol and I had a few minutes to talk after school. I said I hoped that my interjecting a suggestion wasn't an interference. She said not at all -- she welcomed it. She also said that when you are trying something new there are always "bumps and bruises" but if you have too many of those, you decide not to continue. She sees my role as protecting her from a few of the bumps and bruises that would otherwise occur as she experiments with drama structures. Hence she won't decide to discontinue with her drama work. I liked this metaphor -- it explains something I've been struggling with about my role in the classroom. (Research Journal, February 6, 1998)

Carol responded to her students with the same supportive and encouraging stance. She recognized who needed the extra little bit of praise and recognition and provided it:

> We did some good things today for a couple of the students. First, Carol chose to work with the letters to and from Quicksilver and his Boss. I watched Katelyn's face when she told the whole class we'd decided to go with her idea. She was thrilled. Katelyn strikes me as a little girl who needs that kind of reinforcement sometimes. (Research Journal, February 27, 1998)

Carol was very open to feedback from me and also from her students. Her attitude of concern translated into her providing many opportunities for risk-taking for her students and for me. She took some time, however, before she would provide herself with the same level of acceptance and encouragement that she offered so freely to others. When she did begin to take risks and experiment, Carol's own personal qualities of **creativity** began to emerge.

Carol did not identify herself as a creative person during the first collaborative planning meetings. She was quite forthright about this stance:

L: The thing that isn't in there is the warm-ups or anything like that. That's just the meat of the drama, you know? It has to be fleshed out -- And the kids will give us some ideas and you probably will have some ideas --
C: No -- I don't have ideas (laughter from all) (Collaborative Meeting #2, p. 12)

Carol's doubts about her own ability to generate creative ideas inspired me to develop what I termed her "insurance policy". This was a package of process drama teaching ideas developed around the poems and stories Carol had chosen to work with in her second action research cycle. I put all of these planning ideas in an envelope and sealed it with a sticker that said "Drama Insurance Policy - Do you <u>really</u> need to open this?". Carol did not open her "insurance policy" during the second cycle and I soon realized my concerns had been misplaced:

C: Maybe breaking out to do some kind of robot factory like we had done with the -- the stalls. And have a teacher-in-role just walk around and discuss what are you selling and what are you -- or what's your task?
L: Sure -- It's funny how great minds think alike. You didn't open your "insurance policy" eh?
C: It's probably in that packet with the dear old calendar but it was the last thing in the envelope that you gave me that I glanced through.
L: Yeah -- well in there there were the transcripts, the schedule and then that envelope was in there too. (Planning with Carol, January 28, 1998)

Carol did reveal her own creative potential during the second action cycle but it was a style that was different from Mary-Ellen's or from my own. Carol made direct connections between creativity and freedom and saw process drama as providing opportunities for both:

C: Just so you know -- so that it's creative -- it's got some structure but there's a lot of freedom -- in that drama -- in that creativity. That you wouldn't have the same level of freedom in Math--
L: Why not?
C: Um -- that's more black and white. That's more -- left brain -- is it left brain? (Collaborative Meeting #5 - p.11)

Carol's creative decisions were more often made spontaneously during classroom action rather than thought out ahead of time. Since a large portion of my own creative decision making happens during the planning stages, I had to learn to adjust to her style over time:

Carol said she wanted them to try one last thing: "Let's see if we can put these four groups together. We'll make it work so it's like a production line." I was impressed -- she wasn't prepared to go for the whole group working together yesterday so this was a risk! She reminded them they weren't inventing new

> movements or food but working with the ones they'd done. She pointed out the area of the room where the production line would form and they all started negotiating with each other about who would do what where. (Research Journal, February 6, 1998)

Even though Carol did not give credit to her own creative abilities in process drama until almost the end of the research study, she always provided many opportunities for her students to develop their own creative ideas.

> Carol asked them to stand in their spaces with their groups and each group would share in turn. Nicholas, Lydia and Abigail began. They were making some type of cake or cookie. Lydia was bringing ingredients, Nicholas was cutting and Abigail was putting it in the oven. They inserted a sound effect -- the stove bell -- buzzing. Carol asked them to share the type of food they were making and then the rest of us guessed what jobs each robot did. This worked well. This group had created some names for themselves -- such creative names I really couldn't record them! (Research Journal, February 6, 1998)

During our February collaborative meeting, Carol explained her own experience of the research process at the mid point of our collaborative work together:

> L: Okay-- And differences in what you thought -- in how you perceive drama or?
> C: Oh sure -- just from the whole six months of -- the experience in July and the deciding to try and do this above all the other teaching responsibilities and other family commitments. And just saying "No, I think I'd like to see what I can do in my classroom" and then having the -- having my hands held and walked through the fall and now just taking my steps on my own. Sure -- I'm growing. (Collaborative Meeting #4, p.22)

At the end of April she was even more positive in articulating what had happened for her as a result of participating in the research study:

> C: I think a crystallization for me was realizing for process drama to happen for me in the classroom -- was to look into whatever literature I picked -- whatever project that we're working on -- and it's living on the edge and being at the edge and letting the children have the choices -- And the crystallization then was -- for Narnia -- the lamppost. That just sort of happened and it was when it was really clear in my mind what I was -- where I was going with my thinking on what to do in my classroom with this age group of children after Linda's gone. Like how do I keep doing this? How do I keep using this process? And so that's that gold bar standard in the back of my brain when I'm looking for what can we do. What can we do for action for processing together as a classroom.
> L: Okay--
> C: So that didn't happen though until -- was that March that we did--?
> L: Yeah--
> C: The others did but it was still picking one of the strategies and then looking at the literature and what do you jibe with. Which is still a valid way to do it --
> L: It's a good start--

C: But it's the idea of -- spontaneous -- Now, when I see something in the literature I would have the confidence to say "This is a time to stop" and kind of push that lesson plan aside or where I thought we were going to go-
L: Oh goodie!
C: -- and do something at the moment.

Carol had grown, over the course of seven months, from a teacher who perceived herself as a "greenhorn" to a teacher who had the confidence to adapt the structures of process drama to her own unique teaching philosophy and teaching style. My "Oh goodie!" was a very understated response in light of Carol's success.

With Mary-Ellen in Planning and Action

Mary-Ellen entered our collaborative research process with extensive English language arts and drama teaching experience at the secondary and middle years levels. Although her drama teaching experience and philosophy were firmly grounded in a theatre arts or performance-oriented perspective, she was very interested in integrating process drama strategies into her English language arts instructional practice. She explained what she wanted her students to achieve with this integration at our first collaborative meeting:

M: Actually I can see the big thing. I mean it's exactly the sort of stuff I was talking about. Elaborate on the subject of the story. Invent on written (?) things referred to in the story. Build the drama from the children's responses to the story. Extend the story back in time or forward into the imagined future. When we brainstormed this over cafe lattes at the end of the summer -- that was exactly the kind of thing I was talking about doing. (Collaborative Meeting #1, p.4)

As Mary-Ellen's explanation of her purposes continued, the differences between her theatre-oriented approach and my non-performance oriented perspective emerged for the first time:

M: Between Booth and Jonothan Neelands. I mean he talks about a starting point -- psychological processes -- That's nicely vague. Where Booth is very specific. The psychological process could be -- ah -- creating a drama from the implications of the story in the lives of the children. Am I right?
L: Sure.
M: Is it not? Am I wet?
L: No. I don't think so.
M: During the story experience, stop at a problem to be solved or a decision to be taken. Active imagining. Let's see -- Subtext -- unwritten scenes going backward and forward in time. Am I crazy?
L: No.
M; How do we work with the theatre structure. Have them write a scene. (pause)

> L: You might -- you might take it to that point. You may not want to write a scene -- you may want to work with some other form. You know? What about -- what about -- okay -- (long pause) (Collaborative Meeting #1, p.5)

As Mary-Ellen and I worked together over the course of the next seven months, the performance/process issues re-emerged on a number of occasions. I realized, however, that I would be able to learn a lot from her and would come to understand a different place on the performance/process continuum if I moved myself closer to her stance rather than demanding that she move closer to mine. My purpose, after all, was to support teachers as they integrated process drama conventions into their English language arts instructional practice rather than to impose my beliefs and perspectives on them. This decision enabled us to achieve a positive, egalitarian relationship which informed and supported us both in our growth as drama/English language arts educators.

The theme of **creativity** emerged as very important to Mary-Ellen's articulation of her own growth throughout the course of the research study. Although she seemed overwhelmed by other professional responsibilities during our first meeting, as soon as we began talking about creating an instructional plan for her first action research cycle she entered into the process with energy and enthusiasm:

> Once we got into brainstorming ideas for working with "On the Sidewalk, Bleeding" though she blew me away with the speed at which she could generate ideas and tie the strategies we used in Neelands' class to the story. It was really interesting for me because I see that I naturally go into taking the lead in brainstorming but she had so many ideas and they were so right on that I just sat back and wrote notes instead. (Research Journal, November 4, 1997)

Mary-Ellen's enthusiasm for creating her instructional plan was evident at our second collaborative meeting in October. We did spend a good portion of the time at this meeting discussing ideas for "On the Sidewalk, Bleeding" (Hunter, 1983):

> L: Those are just suggestions --
> M: Yeah but I'm picking up on that idea. Um -- I don't know [inaudible] for time. I think I think you could break the talk show down -- The talk show but you could also have -- um -- I'm thinking of something written I want to have come out of this -- would be -- a newspaper article. Either a straight report of the death or an editorial against (?) But what we could do is -- before we even go to the talk show -- or -- I don't know -- It could be -- I want to run this by you. A newspaper reporter that goes and talks to various people.

L: Yeah
[inaudible -- both talking at once]
M: No -- He's trying to get facts.
L: Interviews
M: Interviews -- This is an investigative reporter. He's picked up just the one-liner or two liner that appeared on the last page of the newspaper about the -- you know -- "Another gang slaying". And he's decided that this isn't going to be just another gang slaying. That he's going to make Andy a person. And therefore he's going to interview people. And so he would have to have -- who would play Laura? We might have a couple of different girls play Laura.
L: Sure. (Planning Meeting #2 - p. 3)

Since Carol was present at this meeting but fairly uninvolved in the planning of Mary-Ellen's drama sequence, we soon decided that two-way planning meetings would be a much more productive use of everyone's time. The telephone quickly became our most important collaborative tool as we communicated ideas about the story Mary-Ellen would explore through drama with her Grade 9 students. She had clear ideas about where she wanted to go with "On the Sidewalk, Bleeding" but suggested that she needed the interplay of ideas between us in order to get there:

M: I'm not getting anywhere -- I want to get to --
L: We want to make a transition --
M: Transition to investigative reporter. Okay how are we going to get there?
L: Oh -- here's an idea. This is just -- What about doing a teacher-in-role thing where they have -- the players, the group, the people who've been involved in this have been called together -- um -- by the police -- well no -- maybe by an investigative reporter -- You know the meeting thing where you have a meeting of people? And um he says that this is a very important story and that he wants to get --
M: As much background as he can --
L: As much background as he can about it and asks the different people who are involved to tell him a little bit about what happened from their perspective -- And you could do it -- you know with that meeting format and you could do it as a teacher-in-role with the teacher in role as the reporter. There's an idea.
M: Where are the kids going to be and which kid is going to come forward? That's my concern.
L: Well that might be something that they might agree on before. One of the ways of working that --
M: I'm thinking it's got to come out of the "role on the wall"--
(Planning with Mary-Ellen, November 16, 1997)

When we talked in January about her first action cycle, Mary-Ellen reflected upon how important it was to her to have the opportunity and support to be creative:

M: You said to me -- and we were talking on the telephone and you made some comment about I just let her talk and she starts coming out with all kinds of ideas. She said she was tired -- but then she comes up with all these ideas -- And I'm thinking -- Yeah, and part of that's just because I had so much to look at -- And I am much better verbally. You may not have noticed that but I am much better verbally. And you gave me that opportunity to start creating. Even though I was tired in that phone conversation -- I was beat at the end of the day. But the adrenaline started to flow because I was creating.

L: Yeah --

M: And so you say, have you been a help and absolutely because -- that allowed me the chance to be creative. That was a fantastic -- and I want to do -- and that's the other thing that I'm finding so frustrating -- which is maybe why I'm thinking about leaving the classroom -- I want to be creative and integrative -- and I can't. I feel like I can't because I'm already too tired. You can't be tired and be truly, effectively creative.(Meeting with Mary-Ellen, January 15, 1998)

Just as Mary-Ellen valued creativity in her own work, she recognized and appreciated the creative work her students did in response to "On the Sidewalk, Bleeding". In addition to the investigative reports the Grade 9 students wrote as their closure activity, Mary-Ellen also asked them to write evaluative comments about the process in which they had been involved. Some of the students' comments are included here as they are illustrative of the creative success of Mary-Ellen's first action research cycle:

> I think that this was a great opportunity to really make our minds work and expand our learning.....I think that putting drama in to our English studies was a great idea and it helps us really get into the story and in the minds of the characters. If only all our classes were like this then I think way more people would be interested in learning. (Lindsay)
>
> Everyone learns in different ways and this project helped people in their way of learning. We did visuals when we did the freeze plays. We had audio's when were were acting or just talking. I learned a great deal. (Megan)
>
> I felt this project was also very important. It demonstrated that learning doesn't have to be in a classroom...I think it helped us to open up our minds more freely. (Allison)
>
> Changing from the classroom to the drama room greatly helped. It had a different atmosphere and gave us more freedom. I found that that freedom helped us to release our imaginations. ... One downside was that the project was very rushed and I believe would be a great long-term project. (Erica)
>
> When I was Laura I felt like I was in the story. That I knew what had happened and was there. So when I went to write the editorial it was a little harder since I was still looking through the eyes of Laura. I had to keep reminding myself that I wasn't Laura anymore.... The only regret that I have is that I wish it was longer. I think we could have learnt more if we had taken more time. But with the time that

> we did spend, I feel that I learnt something that I wouldn't have learnt if we did it another way. (Suzanne)
>
> When it came time to the writing stage we were much more efficient because it was as if we had experienced Andy's death. I think this style of teaching is much more productive and exhilarating. (Sara)
>
> It made everyone feel like they were important so when they played a role they did a good job. I thought the editorial we did at the end was a fair request because it was basically a summary of the whole educational drama research project. (Nicholas)
>
> When I first read "On the Sidewalk Bleeding", I didn't think much of it. This process really helped me use my imagination to get inside Andy's life.(unsigned)
>
> The props were really well done and got me thinking a lot better than if I had to start the tableaus from scratch. (Patrick)

Mary-Ellen invested a great deal of time in creating her instructional plan and in creating props to be used as focus objects in the students' small group work. She explained the tension that had been created within her as a result of taking this time away from her other professional responsibilities:

> M: I tried not to let my mind think about the marking that was sitting there that should have been done and didn't get done. But -- oh, well-- I tried not to let that spoil what was happening for me with the creative juices flowing and my getting totally involved and trying to imagine what are the kids going to do with this note between Freddie and Angela.
> L: That was one of the props they picked too.
> M: And the joy I felt when I finished that note and took it over to my husband. I said, "Read this and tell me what you think." And his response -- he said "Oh, isn't that perfect? Aren't kids just -- oh look at the lipstick." He didn't realize that it was a prop that I'd just made. [mutual laughter]. It was a prop. He said. "You're kidding? Oh yeah, those lips look like yours." Yeah - but those were beautiful moments. I really enjoyed doing that. That was fun. Maybe some drama teachers wouldn't spend that time over props but you see I'm very prop-oriented.
> L: Yeah--
> M: -- And I like that kind of thing. And the kids liked it.
> L: And when you put that energy in and it pays off--
> (Meeting with Mary-Ellen, January 15, 1998)

Even though Mary-Ellen valued the opportunities the research study afforded for creative work with her students, issues of **accountability** and **constraint** influenced her total experience of the research process in less than positive ways. These two themes are so tightly intertwined in Mary-Ellen's story that it is impossible to explore one without reference to the other. Mary-Ellen set very high standards for herself as a teacher but often

found that she was exhausted and stressed as a result of striving to meet those standards. The tension between her desire to achieve excellence in her professional practice as an English language arts and drama educator and her feelings of being bound and constricted by added professional responsibilities emerged in our first collaborative meeting in October:

> M: But just a second there Linda. There's something else here. There's something else here. There's another part to the equation for me. I'm getting pressure now from (name of a senior citizens' residence) and from the administration and from the students to do the book again that I did last year. And if that's the case then I would have to start the interviews for that in (the senior citizens' residence) in the next couple of weeks. And that's in the same class. I wanted to make it another class but the other 9's are just not strong enough to do the work. They won't be able to do it.
> C: What are you saying. I don't understand.
> M: Oh. Last year my French immersion class - 9C- went over to (name of senior citizens' residence). It's a senior citizens residence? And they interviewed people who had -- that they were interested in being interviewed. And we went over. I think it was four or five periods -- they went over with their tape recorders. They interviewed these people -- they came back -- they transcribed it -- they started getting it written up as stories. The project took us all year. The book was finally finished in May. It had it's opening the first night of Showcase. But it's a long involved process and if I'm going to do it I have to start it in the next couple of weeks. (Collaborative Meeting #1 - p. 21)

She felt accountable to the students, the school administration and to the senior citizens involved in this writing project but she also stated her sense of accountability to her teaching and to our collaborative research project. She seemed to experience her extensive responsibilities as a form of constraint:

> M: November -- December. I've got to sit down and -- first of all Linda I have to decide if I'm going to succumb to the pressure. This is a lot of extra work for me as well. Cause I end up doing all the proofreading -- well not all -- But I end up doing the major final proofreading -- So somewhere in there I've got to fit our research work as well and I want to get into this when the students have already gone over short stories and the elements of a short story -- and they have a good, basic understanding of that. (Collaborative Meeting #1 - p. 22)

As the school year continued, Mary-Ellen seemed to experience her professional commitments as increasingly more stressful. She had some health problems in the winter months and had also undertaken the supervision of student teachers in the fall term. During the winter and spring terms, she had agreed to take a group of students to Greece during the March break and was responsible for coordinating and producing the school's variety

night in May. These extra-curricular responsibilities were important to her but she considered her students' achievement in exams to be equally important:

> M: And I'll have a chance to think what I'm going to do with the eights and whether I'll do it in January or whether I'll do it in February -- cause they have to write midterms the end of January.
> L: Yeah, I know you said January was a bad month.
> C: Mine write midterms the third week in January --
> M: I'm probably going to spend January just getting my kids to the point where they can write their midterms -- those student teachers really (inaudible -- something about took up time).
> L: Well they are a lot of work.
> M: They slowed everything up -- rather drastically. Anyway so we're looking at probably the second week then in January to get together as a threesome. (Collaborative Meeting #3 - p. 8)

The success of Mary-Ellen's first action research cycle brought competing issues of accountability into sharp contrast for her and created additional stress:

> L: What's suffered?
> M: Well you know what's suffered for me is marking. I had to steal from Peter to pay Paul. And there was guilt attached with that.
> L: Okay.
> M: But this whole year has been full of guilt.
> L: Oh dear.
> M: Yeah it has. It's been hell on wheels and it's continuing to go on and on and on and on. And I want to do more of this kind of work -- and I'm thinking "well -- the marking doesn't --" But then you see I have a very high standard with regards to my marking. Like I like a turn around of a week.
> L: Yeah--
> M: And I haven't been able to do that. And I think personally -- morally -- that's wrong -- because the kids need to have it back as quickly as possible so they can make sense of it all. And I haven't been able to do it. (Collaborative Meeting #4 - pp. 37-38)

By March, Mary-Ellen was seriously considering whether or not she could finish her third action cycle. Although she was working with "The Proof" (Moore, 1982) in her Grade 8B English language arts class, she had not had the time to plan process drama activities to support her work with this short story. She communicated her distress to me in a phone message:

> As regards the class, I've continued working with *The Proof*. I've already told them that I'm going to do something in a dramatic vein but I don't know what yet. I haven't had a moment to even really think about it. I looked at your role cards and I'm playing around with that idea but in terms of having something definitive to say to you "this is what we're doing and this is the time line" -- I just don't -- I don't have it. And I mean it could be next week by the time I get around to doing

> something and I know that you probably need something a lot more definite than that to work with so what I can do is let you know as it evolves and if you can be there fine and if you can't, then you can't and whatever the kids do I can certainly give you the records of it. I have the records of the monologues and their evaluations. I photocopied both for you. I'm sorry to let you down but I just -- I'm completely overwhelmed with work this year. (Phone message, March 9, 1998)

The result of this phone call was that I stepped in and prepared the written instructional plan and teaching materials based on earlier conversations Mary-Ellen and I had had in reference to this particular short story. Mary-Ellen taught from this plan and was relieved to have received tangible support in the form of prepared materials since she felt committed and accountable to her students and to me. She was not prepared, however, to undertake another action research cycle without a definite and structured plan in place.

By the end of the research study, however, Mary-Ellen was prepared to examine the advantages to letting go of her need to structure instructional time as thoroughly as had been her previous practice. She speculated about how she might manage to be more flexible within the time constraints of teaching in a junior high school setting:

> M: ...At the secondary level I think it has to be thought out -- thought about ahead of time -- planning done by the teacher -- and then once you're in it -- I think what I would have to do is build into that time with a question mark after it. Like Period 4 -- question mark -- and leave it open and say "Now if A happens or if B happens I could still do this -- let me just leave some time open here in case something neat happens that I want to -- Then if nothing neat happens I'll be ready to do this --" Do you know what I'm saying? (Collaborative Meeting #5 - p.4)

Internal constraints influenced Mary-Ellen in a different way than they influenced Carol. Mary-Ellen was secure in her competence as an English language arts teacher and as a drama teacher but her need to carefully structure learning experiences and to be able to predict students' responses to those experiences caused her anxiety when she first started working with certain process drama conventions. She was especially nervous about working with the "teacher-in-role" convention during her first action research cycle. She reflected on her feelings in relation to this event:

> M: I have bursts of it. And that's the way it seems to go. This has been a glorious little spurt of creativity for me -- it's been a little beacon. It caused me a lot

of stress and sleepless nights and worrying about was I going to be able to help these kids -- and would I be able to be there to do what I needed to do for them. That really worried me. Whether I had what it took. I was amazed at your comments about me as a teacher-in-role -- because I know how tense I was going into that. You remember that morning and then the printer wouldn't work and I--

L: Yes, you were tense!

M: I was really tense. And part of it was because I was in fear. I was about to perform. And I took that quite seriously and I guess I -- I did intellectually understand that I had been concerned about this but I don't think I really understood emotionally to that depth? I was concerned because for me this was performance. I was going to perform. And my ability to perform was going to set the tone for them. And if I didn't get that tone right -- in the first few sentences -- I could destroy it -- or I could make it very, very difficult for the class to get on track. Do you understand what I'm saying?

L: Yeah -- I do. That's a lot of weight on your shoulders. You're too hard on yourself.

M: Maybe I am. Probably more than I need to but I took it very seriously. I do take my work very seriously.

L: Yeah -- I realize that. I do. (Meeting with Mary-Ellen, January 15, 1998)

Mary-Ellen did take her work very seriously and this dedication influenced her attitude towards making **connections** between process drama and her goals and purposes as an English language arts teacher. She was interested in using drama conventions to deepen students' engagement with and response to literature (a specific educational goal that we soon discovered we had in common). When she was reflecting on her first action research cycle with the Grade 9 students, her satisfaction with her achievement of this purpose came through clearly:

M: Well I haven't read the editorials so I can't give you my response to that but I think I've already given you my response to their evaluations. And I'm very pleased. I feel a bit chagrined that it was rushed and I wish it hadn't been but alright, I can't do anything about that now. I'm very pleased and when I get things like kids talking about learning styles and making connections between what we did at the very beginning which was a very sort of standard debrief of the story. A very standard English approach to debriefing a story -- And they're making connections with the very standard English with a capital "E" into their drama which was very creative. And then they start talking about "I'll never forget this." and "He meant so much more" meaning Andy meant so much more. "he was a real person not a fictional character". That is what excites me. It gives me great satisfaction. I feel like I'm smiling all over the place. I mean it hearkens back to that comment I made in my very first interview when I started out teaching and the idealistic, altruistic, "If I can reach but one child" --

L: Yeah -- we were talking about that --

M: And I thought -- And the kids said, "Gee, can we do this again? I'd like to spend -- This is so much more interesting than --" And I'm thinking "Oh, god. Are my English classes that boring?" But, yes sometimes I'm sure

> they are. I'm sure they are. I try not to let them be but I'm sure they are. Kinda dry. And kinda formula. Because of course I'm right now trying to teach them how to think analytically and write analytically. And give them formulas to make it easier for them to slot it in. That's kind of dry. That's kind of dry and that's not exciting stuff like this. So how does a teacher balance -- because you have to do some of the other work? How do you balance out the creative, exciting stuff with the other? It would be nice to be able to work on a full year's program where it was one then the other, one then the other -- and then start bringing the two things more -- together.
>
> (Meeting with Mary-Ellen, January 15, 1998)

When she reflected on her work with the Grade 8 students in February, she made further connections between drama work and English language arts objectives:

> L: Well the kids' response. I mean you can see how they react to it. They love it. They get involved.
> M: Well I think when you look back over those evaluations that the Grade 8's did on their project -- a lot of the comments were "I have a deeper appreciation of the characters and what it takes to create a character" And they got an insight into creating a play. But that's a writing process.
> L: Well sure it is--
> M: It's in the language arts curriculum guide. And they had the opportunity to get into that by using the drama.
>
> (Collaborative Meeting #5 - p.6)

Mary-Ellen did make some connections between her instructional planning for the students and our summer school class experience, specifically within her first action research cycle:

> M: We did it in Process Drama (reference to summer session class). It was about a minute. No more than that.
> L: Yeah, just sort of to hear from everybody -- just -- yeah about a minute or two dialogue each -- eh? Per group? Okay -- so that's one to two minutes dialogue.
> M: Now, when they finish the scene -- what did we do in Process -- did we not debrief each scene as we watched it? What we did is we played them in a sequence?
> L: Yeah.
> M: And maybe that's what we should do next. We should have the kids play their scenes in a sequence.
> L: Yeah -- for this bringing them to life. From birth -- from "It's a Boy!" to this sympathy card?
> M: Yeah. Then place scenes in sequence.
>
> (Planning with Mary-Ellen, November 25, 1997)

After her first action research cycle, however, she began to emphasize the connections between English language arts purposes and the performance-oriented drama teaching strategies with which she was very familiar. She was integrating process drama conventions into the space between the two:

M: No, I just did it in the classroom. And we did the brainstorm and there was no way I could take them to the drama room at that point. So I thought just do it in the class and we did -- and the kids thought it was kind of neat to do it in the classroom. I've told them that their performances would be in the drama room. So what we talked about -- what a monologue was, what a tableau was, and what internal dialogue was. And then I said you have three options here -- and that took some explaining for them to get. I said "You can write a monologue based on -- coming from any one of the characters that you mentioned. And of course they listed the characters in the story and then they went beyond that and they started listing other people. The nurse, the doctor, the neighbours -- to whom Mikey delivers the newspapers -- Jim's boss, Alan's friends who are nameless in the story -- Kathleen's friends who have names but we don't know anything about them -- the family doctor who comes in and says "Jim we're going to have to take her to the hospital because she won't stop crying." -- the client that was supposed to be coming for dinner but Jim had to cancel when he gets a phone call from his kids saying "Dad we need you at home." They brainstormed a whole lot of very interesting people. Oh -- the lady in the bed next to Mom.

C: Oh -- neat--

M: And I said "You can give her a name or you can just have her the lady in the bed -- or lady in bed #2." So they had this whole list of *dramatis personae* and they had the option to 1) do just a monologue -- so they would just write the monologue and they would perform the monologue -- but they wouldn't have to memorize it -- they could read it dramatically -- or -- 2) monologue plus tableau -- so the monologue is going on but in the background you see this frozen image and the frozen image relates somehow to the monologue--

(Collaborative Meeting #4 - p.8)

As she explained this work she had done with the Grade 8 class for the story "U is Part of Us" (Hancock, 1982), her use of theatrical terminology revealed her strong emphasis on student performance as central to this specific English language arts project:

M: They're going to choose -- they're going to play playwright? And if they go tableau - internal dialogue, director and producer. So their roles will be triple. Because they have to write it. They have to direct it if they go to tableau -- and they're directing themselves as well -- and internal dialogue. And producer in the casting

L: Oh from the other--

M: They're in charge of casting.

L: Casting director--

M: Casting director. They'll also have to play that as well because they'll have to choose the other actors that they want. They'll have to rehearse them. So it's going to be a bit of a schmoz -- I mean there's going to be people working in different plays. But what I will have to do tomorrow is say "If you've committed to another actor -- the most commitment you can make is to two actors. You can't commit to more than two actors -- or two playwrights."

L: Yeah -- cause they might have to be in two places at the same time when they're doing the work -- yeah-- This is really exciting! Are the kids excited about it?

M: Yeah they seem to be. Yeah, they are.
C: Have you done that before? Anything like that?
M: Mmm hmm--
C: You've done tableaux--
M: I've done this sort of work with Grade 8's in this story before. I've never included the tableaux -- that was sort of off the top of my head. I thought -- let's throw it in and see what happens.
(Collaborative Meeting #4 - p.12)

This integration of English language arts teaching practice, performance-oriented drama teaching practice and process drama conventions, indicates the level of **praxis** that Mary-Ellen was achieving in her classroom action.

Just as Mary-Ellen was making the connections between response to literature, theatre and process drama conventions explicit for herself, she became increasingly aware of the importance of making these connections explicit for students. During the last action research cycle in her classroom, she explained to students how they would be integrating their own recently acquired knowledge and experience:

> Mary Ellen explained that they would be using their research notes to do the drama work and the writing project that would follow it. She explained that the drama work would prepare them for the writing project and she would be giving them some questions to answer in their writing. She also told them that they would have their own choice of writing form and listed a few possible forms: poetry, journals, letters, etc. She said they had read the story, researched the period and now were going to "live it in hopes you'll have more source material at your fingertips to write." She summarized by telling them they would be using three areas of knowledge to prepare their drama work: their own ideas, knowledge of the story and the knowledge of history and witchcraft they'd learned during their research. She explained "Once we've watched the vignettes, we'll have the total story."
> (Research Journal, March 11, 1998)

At our final collaborative meeting in April, Mary-Ellen explained how all of the connections she had made among the summer school class experiences, her English language arts teaching practice and our collaborative process drama work were making a brand new connection possible for her as she prepared to begin her own Master's of Education degree:

M: In March -- before I left for Greece -- I knew that I got this [sabbatical to do her M. Ed.]. So after our last meeting. So my work with you has seemed to be -- For once in my life the timing was perfect. It was what I needed to do. And it's helping me to formulate and play around with ideas for my own work -- and I think it also has -- opened me up. One of the reasons I always have student teachers -- and I did year after year after year -- ended up getting an award from the University for being such a fool to have student teachers year after year after year. [laughter] -- was because they

always brought something fresh and new into the room. They were young. They were risk takers. They were willing to try this and try that. And it kept me young as a result. And they kept me prepared to change. ... But anyway -- the work with you was just another extension of that -- Sort of keeping me creative -- keeping me young -- keeping me looking at other alternatives and new ways of doing things. Because -- yeah -- if you sat me in a room and said "Okay -- now here's a number of pieces of literature -- Now be creative." I'm not sure that I would.

L: I wonder if anybody can, though? Like, I wonder if you can do that in isolation? Because I know when we get together and talk about things or talk on the phone or in school for you [to Carol], I find that--

M: The ideas really start to flow--

L: Yeah -- yeah -- it -- somebody's says something and it bounces something and that --

M: Yeah -- that sharing of ideas...

(Collaborative Meeting #5, p.25)

Mary-Ellen's **concern** for her students related to her strong desire to invoke within them a love of literature and a love of drama. When they were working on their monologue presentations for "U is Part of Us", she made sure that each student found the costumes, props and furniture he or she needed to present a theatrically complete performance:

> Mary Ellen circulated among the students offering suggestions and comments on costumes, props, etc.: "that suit is so big", "Heather, you need a dress", "Gentlemen, you all need some kind of costume". I did overhear references to the characters in the story from the students as well" "I'm Alan", "Okay, I'm Kathleen", "Pat, you're not Jim" etc., etc. One boy is reading his monologue out loud to himself. Another inquires of his friend "Who are you supposed to be for your skit?" I notice a couple of girls in robes and nightgowns. Mary Ellen is over in one of the costume cupboards helping students select clothes to wear. I hear a girl say "I need a blanket -- I need like a big blanket." At 9:11 am Mary Ellen gets the group's attention: "Alright, guys -- we need to take our places. We need someone to warm up the stage. [pause] It's a rehearsal, guys -- that's all." (Research Journal, February 17, 1998)

Mary-Ellen expressed her concern for students' feelings openly and often praised them when they demonstrated concern and respect for each other:

> Michael presented Mikey next. This was the one that everyone enjoyed so much because of the little boy vulnerability. He has memorized it and does a good job of capturing the character of a little boy -- lots of courage for an adolescent boy to take this one on! A couple of the guys rib him after he finishes: "Very touching Mike." "You're making me cry." Mary Ellen says "Hush up guys." It doesn't seem to bother Michael much. I am writing and then hear Mary Ellen say "Oh, James -- that was nice James." Did James give Michael a hug or what? Sorry I missed seeing what prompted this comment. (Research Journal, February 23, 1998)

Mary-Ellen's concern for me and my research needs emerged on different occasions throughout the course of the research study. She wanted to make sure that the data I was collecting in her classroom would be helpful and useful to me:

> M: Can you use the information I've given you without you actually being there to hear what I've said?
> L: Mmm hmm -- sure. I'm doing that all the time. That's what this is about.
> M: But you weren't there transcribing me explaining monologue, internal dialogue, tableaux.
> L: No, not necessarily -- but look at what the purpose of this research is. The purpose of this research is for you -- I mean I'm not going to be around -- so the purpose of the research is so that you innovate -- you get some support in innovating in your classroom. And if I'm there all the time -- um -- and that's the only time you're doing drama -- then we're not being successful. You're doing drama when I'm not there -- you've talked about it [this directed to Carol, I think].
> M: No, I'm just thinking about material you can use for your dissertation -- that's what I'm thinking of. (Collaborative Meeting #4 - p.13)

Mary-Ellen's concern for her students' needs and for my needs as a researcher was probably a decisive factor in her decision to remain in the research project when the stress of other obligations became overwhelming to her in the spring.

Mary-Ellen's experience of **authority** was quite different than Carol's in several respects. Perhaps because of her extensive experience in teaching English language arts and drama, Mary-Ellen relied upon herself as an authority from the very beginning stages of the research process. She did ask for my theoretical input occasionally during our planning process but usually it was for the purposes of labeling or explaining a strategy we had not used in the summer session class with Dr. Neelands:

> M: Cause the "role on the wall" -- You'd better go over it again -- And I had it sitting here and I've lost it -- So could you go over how that's done?
> L: The role on the wall? Okay. Well the way Neelands describes it in the book -- okay. You put up a piece of paper or you could hand out individual papers with some sort of an image or an outline of a character. Okay? And then the students fill in what they know. He says "role on the wall" because you put up a poster or something with an outline of the character. You know maybe draw around a body or something. But that's just one way of doing it. You wouldn't have to do it that way. And then the students fill in -- writing down different things that they generate about this character. That's how they flesh out the character. That's how he describes it. It's in *Structuring Drama Work* -- so. I don't know if I've captured it exactly as he presents it. He gives an example in there. But that could be done with posters on the wall. It could be done on individual sheets of paper -- you know -- where you had a sheet of paper and people in groups of two or

> three gathered around one sheet of paper and they had the role and they filled it in together. That's a way they could do it as a small group thing. That's just -- that's one possibility.
> (Planning with Mary-Ellen, November 16, 1997)

Mary-Ellen did use the "role on the wall" strategy exactly as I had explained it in reference to Neeland's (1990) book.

Mary-Ellen did share classroom authority with me on a few occasions although my usual role in her classroom was that of observer. The first time she passed the teacher role to me, I was surprised:

> As the class begins, Mary Ellen tells the students I'm in charge while she leaves the room for a moment. Help! It has been a long time since I've been in charge of Grade 8 students but they all bustle around and get their scenes ready and I only have to speak once to a couple of girls who are both pulling at either end of the same sweater. I'm surprised that the old "teacher voice" comes back so immediately -- it must still be lurking pretty close under the surface! (Research Journal, February 18, 1998)

Interestingly, Mary-Ellen asked for my input more frequently during her final action research cycle than she had in the previous two. I speculated about the reasons for this in a memo to myself:

> Mary-Ellen asked me if I thought the groups should record the dialogue and tableau outlines on the chart paper for display to the class. I replied that I thought there might be more entertainment value in students not knowing (beyond the factual details) what was happening in the other tableaux. (Research Journal, March 16, 1998 (*Memo: April 3/98 - Mary-Ellen doesn't usually ask for my feedback on organizational matters. Has she done it this time because I was the one who recorded our plan in writing and prepared materials?)*

Mary-Ellen's need for structure and predictability in her teaching may have influenced her very clear establishment of herself as the authority figure with her students. Her classroom groups were much larger than Carol's and she was dealing with many different groups of adolescent students over the course of the day and so the authority role she took in her classroom could be perceived as very necessary within the institutional context of her teaching practice. She did, however, frequently invite students to voice their own ideas, opinions and suggestions thus maintaining organizational authority herself but sharing content authority with the students:

> The next monologue (I think number 13) was Erin T. She did not use a tableau and worked with the character, Kathleen. Mary Ellen asked for student suggestions and there were numerous students who had something to say. Mary Ellen commented "My goodness, we're getting a whole crop of directors in the room." Suggestions included that Erin move more and use more pauses. Mary Ellen reminded her that although she didn't have to memorize her monologue she did need to present it dramatically and should use pauses and expression to support the content of her work. Another student suggested Erin should have more expression in her face. Mary Ellen asked her to read the first few lines again and gave her some specific direction in terms of where to pause, how to move with the lines and how to sigh "from the bottom of the tummy". When she asked Erin if she could feel the difference, Erin said she could. Mary Ellen closed by saying "Don't be afraid to let yourself be Kathleen. You're written some good lines and now you want to live them." (Research Journal, February 18, 1998)

Mary-Ellen may have been more willing to share the teacher authority role with me at the end of the research project than she was in the beginning stages. Also, I may have been more willing to assume that role in her classroom at the end of the project. Our conversation during our last collaborative meeting suggests this possibility and possible reasons for the shift we both experienced:

> M: Off the top of my head -- no. I don't think I'd have you do anything differently. Except it might have been neat -- just from my own perspective -- to see you in role. Just to see you in role -- just for the fun of watching you do it. And sharing that experience with you.
> L: Oh sure -- I could have done that. I love it. But you see I--
> M: But in my situation, it didn't seem to lend itself --
> L: I wouldn't have -- Yeah -- I would have done it if you'd asked me. I would have done it if you'd asked me. But I felt -- in your classroom -- that you had as many skills as I did in terms of taking on a role -- you know. And I didn't -- And maybe with the junior high too -- maybe with that age group of kids -- I wasn't quite as confident? Because my teaching experience is at Carol's level? I'm sure I could have done it. I'm sure I could have done it and -- we sort of niggled around the edges when we did that investigative reporter thing. But we didn't really get into it so-- Okay -- okay -- that's good to know. (Collaborative Meeting #5 - p. 23)

As Mary-Ellen speculated on how the research project had changed her as a teacher, she commented on her increased willingness to share authority in the classroom context:

> M: Well they want to do it again. I think they would have loved it if I'd had a whole year of nothing but this sort of work. And as a result I've done more group sort of work -- even though it may not actually be process drama. I've done more free -- kind of freewheeling group work--
> (Collaborative Meeting #5 - p. 28)

The statement above indicates that the collaborative experience did change Mary-Ellen's instructional practice in some ways that she recognized and valued.

Through a Researcher's Eyes: My Own Story

> I've recognized that there are possibilities for locating myself as an organic part of this research rather than as the causal and controlling agent above and outside it. I've seen possibilities for a human emancipation that grows not from imposing my critical agenda on teachers and their classrooms but from opening my mind and heart to the realities of their experience within the institutional context of the schools in which we live out this research project. I've realized possibilities that place theoretical constructs, planning cycles and structured "rules" in perspective: as tools to be used appropriately rather than dictates to be slavishly followed or imposed artificially. And, perhaps most importantly, I've delved into myself and realized the possibilities of who I am and how the reality that is me may be integrated into my academic work in a more holistic way.
>
> I began this journey in the locks of a man-made canal. I continue it swimming along with the current of a river. My view of the turns and twists in the river's course is obscure at this early point in the journey but I anticipate they will reveal even more exciting possibilities as the living practice of my own action research continues to unfold.
>
> (Final Paper, EDSEC 606 - Action Research, December, 1997)

I wrote these words in December when my research journey had only just begun. I realize, however, that the insights suggested in this excerpt were instrumental in carrying me through until the end of April, 1998 and that they informed my practice as teacher, collaborator, and researcher in positive ways.

As I re-read the questions I framed to guide this research study, the key word that stands out for me is "support". I was determined to support both Carol and Mary-Ellen as they integrated drama structures into their instructional practice. Not surprisingly, the theme that seems to have had the most influence on my growth and change as an educator and a researcher is the theme of **concern.** I practiced concern in a very deliberate way throughout the course of the study, both in collaborative planning experiences with the teachers and in classroom action with the teachers and students.

I expressed my concern for students' needs during the first collaborative meeting:

> L: Yeah -- and that's... I think that's a really good point but I think another thing that we probably want to look at now is "how do we start it off?" so that the actors -- the kids who are going to be actors some day and who love to get up on stage -- don't take over. Cause I've seen that happen -- where the kids -- you know if you don't take the time to set up some structures and procedures ahead of time -- the guys who -- who -- are gonna be the actors anyway -- (Collaborative Meeting #1 - p.6)

Although the students' needs were important to me, I soon realized that both Carol and Mary-Ellen were as actively concerned about their students' welfare as I was and I turned my concern more directly to the needs of my collaborative partners.

I had certain expectations, drawn from the literature, about the necessity of including teachers' voices directly in the research study through the vehicle of teacher-recorded reflective journals. Even though I realized early on that the teachers did not view journal-keeping as an important part of their research process, I had difficulty letting go of this part of my research plan:

> I didn't mention journals to them tonight. I feel guilty asking them to keep journals but I know I have to because all our voices have to be in this work -- our reflective individual voices as well as our active, planning ones. Can I get brave enough to ask them next time? Maybe we should build a little writing time into the end of our planning meetings. I'll toss it out as a possibility.
> (Research Journal, October 8, 1997)

It was only when I realized that my insistence on journal keeping was in direct opposition to my stated purpose of supporting the teachers that I was able to acknowledge that I would have to find spaces for the teachers' voices in other ways. I made my ongoing concern about including their perspectives and voices explicit to them at our final collaborative meeting:

> L: Okay -- okay -- Cause I guess that's one of the concerns. I'm making -- I'm reading over all this stuff and I'm making decisions about what it means -- And because this has been a collaborative project -- I want to know if you think it means something different -- I want to hear it. I want your voices in here and I don't -- I mean I have them on tape and I have them in the field notes but -- I feel like a lot of it is being filtered through me? And okay -- it's my research project -- but I guess I want to know how you feel about that? If I'm on the money -- if I'm off base -- I really want to know. Because I want to represent everybody's voice in this.
> [Very long pause. Tape turned off while people think and read]
> (Collaborative Meeting #5, p.10)

Another issue of concern that emerges in meeting transcripts and my research journal, was my recognition that these teachers had very little extra time to spare and that I was responsible for making sure their research study time was spent in ways that were productive and satisfying for both of them:

> We spent a lot of time tonight talking about scheduling and when I'll be out in the schools doing the first round of research. I felt anxious because I felt like we were wasting Carol's time while Mary Ellen and I were talking about her schedule and Mary Ellen's time when Carol and I were discussing hers.
> (Research Journal, October 27, 1997)

I was also concerned about the amount of time I was asking them to spend reading transcripts of our meetings and field notes. When we talked about this issue at our final meeting, I realized that I was not alone in experiencing some guilt around the issue of data reading:

> L: No and you see this is the thing. This collaborative research is supposed to be -- you know -- so even. But that isn't fair.
> M: Not unless you give us more time -- I mean I agree with Carol. I read my stuff over thoroughly to make sure I understood what it was you'd written down and if I wanted to change things. I wanted to make sure -- it was very important that I read mine word for word.
> L: Yeah -- but Carol's
> M: I skimmed it.
> L: Okay--
> M: But at the same time there's a sense of guilt that I should have given just as much attention to Carol's transcripts as I gave to my own.
> (Collaborative Meeting #4 - p.39)

My concern for the teachers' welfare seemed to reach its most concentrated focus in early March when I began to doubt my ethical right to expect any more participation from Mary-Ellen:

> We decided to talk on the weekend and she will know by then if she can find any more time to work on drama ideas for *The Proof*. I am torn between wanting to see more drama in her classroom and feeling a sympathetic need just to let it go so that the pressure will be off her shoulders. She sounds so tired and stressed right now. She thanked me for being understanding and I remarked that I had a pretty clear picture of the pressure cooker she was operating in -- that teachers are operating in. Is it unrealistic to expect tired and overworked teachers to innovate and be creative? I'm pretty sure that it is not only unrealistic -- it is downright unfair. What does this mean to the university researcher? What ethical responsibility does someone in my position have to address these issues in school/university partnership research? These are questions that deserve further exploration and reflection -- not just in the area of educational drama in the English language arts but right across the curriculum and right across the elementary/junior high spectrum of education. (Research Journal, March 2, 1998)

It may be, however, that my concern for the teachers' welfare and success gave them a concrete experience of being supported and encouraged and led both Carol and Mary-Ellen to view the research project as a positive experience:

C: With all your help I never had that feeling. I had the confidence that I could do things in front of you. You still loved me. You still accepted me as a teacher and you were -- you were waiting for me to ask or you were waiting in the wings -- You were available but you weren't shoving anything down my throat.
L: Okay.
M: And you saved my a-- with the Grade 8's.
(Collaborative Meeting #5, p.21)

The theme of **accountability** took on a different significance in my experience of the research process than it seemed to take for either Carol or Mary-Ellen. Although I was accountable to the university as a graduate teaching assistant, these responsibilities rarely interfered with scheduling time for collaborative meetings or classroom action plans. Since the research study was my first priority, I experienced few of the conflicts of accountability that were an ongoing issue for both teachers.

My own sense of accountability was more specifically related to theoretical issues than to practical ones. I felt a strong sense of being accountable to the research methodology and to the recommendations of collaborative action researchers (as evidenced by my early preoccupation with having the teachers keep reflective journals). This sense was especially acute during the early stages of the research:

> We do have an action plan -- a sketchy one but it's there in writing so I guess we've started. I'm glad I typed up and ran off these forms today. I'm glad I put everything in duotangs. It was a good idea as it sort of kept us focused a bit on the structure. I do have to keep us focused on the cycle I think.
> (Research Journal, October 8, 1997)

I also felt accountable to the theoretical base informing my own understanding and practice of process drama. I was quite clear whenever my classroom practice was drawn directly from the literature:

C: Oh it was great --
M: That's wonderful --
L: Yeah -- they had a good time with it -- but that -- And I won't take credit for the *Pied Piper* drama out of my own brain, either. And I will give credit to David Booth and Carol Tarlington --
(Collaborative Meeting #3 - p.24)

My sense of accountability to the theoretical base translated into my frequent reference to this base as my primary **authority** in reasoning and explaining my own

planning and teaching decisions. Since classroom management is frequently a concern that some teachers have when they begin to work with process drama structures, I provided some reading material from Neelands (1984) related to drama contracts for Carol and Mary-Ellen during our first meeting:

> L: Well I've got the book and page 24 is where it starts -- But the thing I though was kind of neat about this is there's -- the learning contract for drama and he talks about -- you know --
> M: Just a second -- turn over
> L: Page 28 --
> M: 27- 28 -- okay.
> L: The terms of the learning contract -- [reads a bit from the chapter] this is 29 -- [reads some more]
> M: I don't know where you are --
> L: I'm on the little picture here -- I'm going around the circle clockwise -- [reads more] These are just some ideas [reads more] You see each of these little centres he's got in fluffy clouds -- um -- would be a sort of a central thing? And then those are sort of the corollaries to it? [reads some more] So it's just sort of a short little chapter that -- I thought he did a pretty good job in this book -- of really addressing a lot of the issues about control and how control changes -- how management changes -- when you're doing drama? So I just put that in --
> C: Before you even come tomorrow, I'll read it.
> L: Gee, I'm giving you more homework not less -- But I just thought it might be interesting and it's not that long and it's spelled out -- So -- and it's from *Making Sense of Drama ; A guide to classroom practice.* (Collaborative Meeting #2 - pp. 21-22)

At our next planning meeting, I again took on the "instructor role" to introduce Carol and Mary-Ellen to drama teaching strategies we had not discussed in our summer session class. Carol put my tendency to inform into its proper perspective:

> L: Oh the "mantle of the expert" --
> C: (laughs) Yes -- the mantle of the expert. Seeing that --
> M: What was the "mantle of the expert"?
> C: Worked out -- gives me an idea than just saying this is what a teacher could be doing in role in front of the class.
> L: It's a Dorothy Heathcote strategy. And it's basically you make these kids the experts -- you know -- on a particular topic. Now we were going to do it with newspaper reporters but we didn't (this to Carol).
> C: No -- and you implemented it at the very end of *Pied Piper* if I remember right -- on -- um -- or was that "hot seating"? Maybe I'm thinking of hot seating --
> L: That was hot seating.
> C: You were hot seating.
> L: I was hot seating -- yeah. I was the Pied Piper and they hot seated me so.
> C: So they had to ask questions --
> L: Yeah --
> C: Well we can go into those kinds of details -- but there were little terminologies that I've seen floating around and probably some I even experienced

> personally -- you know -- this summer. But what does that really mean? When I see it happen with kids in real life that's the quality -- that's the mentorship -- that I enjoy in this relationship. So that I can develop and have the confidence to -- "Let's go try this." You know?
> (Collaborative Meeting #3 - p.14)

As the research study continued and I was providing both Carol and Mary-Ellen with more and more research data (field notes and transcripts) to check, I began to feel a little bit reluctant to keep providing theoretical articles for them to read. I had a sense that they perceived this reading material differently than I did. I decided to check with them at the last collaborative meeting and confirmed that my instincts were accurate:

> L: [laughs] I don't remember doing any of that! But no -- it's really interesting and I felt like I shouldn't ask any more of you and I wonder now -- Like one of the things that I wrote down here -- Did I give you enough articles to read -- enough resources -- Did you get enough?
> M: Oh god -- we couldn't -- I'm sorry -- I couldn't have read anything more -- no -
> L: Okay--
> M: That was not something that I needed at that point in time -- was to have articles to read--
> L: Okay--
> M: I was having problems keeping up with your ethnographic notes -- and feeling like I had read the material properly so that I could discuss -- and be cogent and brilliant -
> L: You don't have to be brilliant--
> M: I wasn't--
> C: Well for me now to have them all in a binder -- to have the research. For me -- because that was my one and only drama class -- And obviously if you've had drama classes in university, you're going to have other textbooks and other experiences under your belt to draw from -- whereas for me -- you know--
> L: Did you get enough articles? [to Carol]
> C: I got plenty to stuff in a binder but -- really --
> L: Would you like more?
> C: But really, really, really -- what do you do -- what are you doing in your classroom and what have I done and then how do I develop more--? And more? No -- I'd probably go to another class -- or I would call you up wherever you are--
> (Collaborative Meeting #5 p.17)

This conversation grounded my understanding of the reflectivity-activity dilemma (Knight et al. 1992) in an experiential context. Teachers do not seem to place a high value on reading theoretical material since it does not seem to them to address the problems and challenges they face daily in the practical context of the school.

Throughout my professional career, as classroom teacher, curriculum writer, university lecturer and freelance writer, the one quality I have valued most highly in my

own range of skills and abilities is the ability to be creative. I've always felt especially satisfied when my colleagues and peers recognized and acknowledged my **creativity**. Prior to this research study, however, I had never experienced the personal rewards and excitement of collaborative creativity within an educational context. Being creative was usually a fairly solitary activity for me. Working with Carol and Mary-Ellen allowed me to experience a new kind of creative energy, especially in relation to developing instructional action plans.

Mary-Ellen's style of generating ideas and making connections between drama strategies and selections of literature was very similar to my own and provided an especially energizing opportunity for both of us. Our creative process was often punctuated by moments of humour, especially when our thoughts were racing off in different directions:

> M: The bag lady is no problem. I have a broken umbrella at school. And a liquor bottle in a paper bag is not a problem because those props are already in the drama room. A switchblade's a problem.
> L: I don't have one of those, Mary-Ellen.
> M: Yeah, and it's got to be one of those contracted ones that pop. And I don't have one like that. It's probably going to mean going to San Francisco and buying one.
> L: Well, my gosh. This is going to get pretty expensive if you have to go all the way to San Francisco to buy a switchblade.
> M: You know the store -- West Edmonton Mall?
> L: Oh -- that San Francisco! (Planning with Mary-Ellen, November 16, 1997)

Since my role in Mary-Ellen's classroom was frequently as an observer, I usually exercised my own creative generation of teaching ideas during the planning stages. On one occasion, however, I did take the opportunity to interject a possibility during classroom instruction since I anticipated a potential problem developing:

> I had a concern about what Andy coming back from the dead would do to the truthfulness of the work so when she came back I mentioned this concern to her and offered the alternative of someone having Andy's diary. She suggested I explain this to the group who was working with Andy's character so I did. I mentioned that we were striving for truthfulness and that Andy coming back from the dead was not consistent with reality and might pre-occupy the others and take their attention away from the interview's purpose. I offered them the diary or a letter from Andy as alternatives and told them it was their choice. Mary Ellen looked for a suitable prop -- Andy's diary. She ended up using a spiral bound notebook from her desk. (Research Journal, December 11, 1997)

Mary-Ellen seemed quite comfortable with this solution but I hesitated to make frequent suggestions in response to classroom action since I interpreted such interjections to be potentially intrusive when I was in the observer role.

I was more comfortable making spontaneous teaching suggestions in Carol's classroom because I had worked with these students in the teacher role and had a clearer idea of how they might respond. I had negotiated a supportive context for creativity with them during the demonstration unit in November:

> L: I'm injecting tension and conflict --
> M: You sure are -- how old are your children?
> C: Ten to --
> L: But did it work?
> C: Sure it did and they came up with great ideas --
> L: Oh yeah --
> C: And they took him on -- do you want to see the shoes? Somebody -- When they met with the Pied Piper they decided they had to make shoes for their children and they asked the Pied Piper if he would please give these to our children -- Elizabeth, fourteen and so and so twelve -- will you please give them shoes for their -- And it was just amazing what they came up with to make sure that those children were okay back in the cave and that they really loved their children --
> L: Yeah -- and they really convinced me. I mean talk about using language for purposeful --
> M: Oh I love it. Oh that's great --
> L: Oh it was fun. I can't take -- oh and this is the money I got paid -- this is the cheque -- Somebody came up and presented this --
> M: A cheque? You settled for a cheque? I hope you didn't! Eleven thousand dollars --
> C: It was gold pieces --(Collaborative Meeting #3 - p.23)

The theme of creativity in my own story is closely related to the theme of **connections**, since I perceived part of my role as a creative collaborator and facilitator to involve making connections between drama strategies, process drama theory and English language arts teaching practice explicit in my discussions with both teachers, but especially with Carol. Sometimes the words I needed to make these connections explicit emerged in surprisingly creative ways:

> Carol talked a little about the "many surprises" that happen when she is experimenting with this work and I commented that this is why some teachers quit doing or avoid doing drama -- because they don't like surprises. We talked about finding the moments in a story that lend themselves to drama. Carol said she wasn't sure where to stop and do some drama and I commented that finding the

> moments came with experience. That the drama thinking developed over time. But I realized as I was talking that there is a way to pin it down more specifically. You look for the moments where the story could go either way -- the places where the outcome is uncertain -- the moments of choice. And then you let the students make the choices in their drama. As I put this into words, Carol responded that this was a very helpful formula. We came up with the term "visual predictions" to describe these moments and decided we liked that term a lot since it relates to spoken predictions in a parallel way. (Research Journal, February 26, 1998)(*Memo: April 1/98 - This was an important moment. We took what happened in the classroom, Carol's "need to know" and put it together with my attempt to translate the theoretical into practical terms.*)

It is interesting that Carol later identified this conversation as the moment when she realized what process drama was really all about in her English language arts program.

I also found myself making connections between classroom action and drama theory in moments apart from working with the teachers or participating in classroom events. I didn't always share these connections with Carol or Mary-Ellen because they related to a theoretical base that I realized was possibly unfamiliar to both of my collaborative partners:

> I'm reminded of Heathcote's construct of "dropping to the universal". The theme of revenge is mentioned so often in the interviews and in the students' writing. It would be interesting to pick up on this revenge theme with these students and see how it would be played out with other related literature. Another theme, identified by Mary Ellen, is how the gang replaces the boy's family. This theme has been mentioned although not as frequently as the theme of revenge. Social issues and opinions about social issues permeate this writing. It seems to me an example of critical theory entering the classroom and the opportunities to push further into the students' own criticisms of school and family are frequently evident in the writing that they do in response to this story. (Research Journal, February 2, 1998)

To share these connections with my collaborative partners would have meant expecting them to read the Wagner (1979) chapter on Heathcote's work and possibly some of the critical theory work as well. As previously mentioned, such an expectation would have been neither welcomed nor fair to my very busy collaborative partners.

These moments of connection were especially important to me, however, as they marked my growth as a drama practitioner and as a teacher educator. These moments marked my own experience of **praxis** within the context of the research study. Such moments could not have occurred if I had not been working in the classroom with real

teachers and real students. I shared my reflections on the personal benefits I was deriving from working with Mary-Ellen and Carol and their students in one of our meetings:

> L: It's been so good for me, you know, because when you've been out of the classroom for awhile. And here I am, I'm standing up -- like I did a lecture Thursday morning to H--- B----'s Children's Lit class on using drama with children's books. And I'm standing up there and I'm thinking I'm not just preaching out of one side of my mouth? I've actually been out doing this and I could bring examples in. And it makes me feel like I have some integrity as a teacher educator. (laughter from the other two) It really does. It's been good for me because you know, as the years roll on and the distance between me and my own classroom expands, I start to think am I going to turn into one of those -- you know -- out of touch old dinosaurs who stands up and tells student teachers how to teach and hasn't been around the kids for twenty years. I mean that's something I don't want to do. So it's been really good for me too. Thank you.
>
> (Collaborative Meeting #3 - p.27)

I also made connections between my past experience as a classroom teacher and the decisions I was making as a university researcher. I came to value my own elementary school teaching experience as an important influence on my ability to feel and express concern and respect for my collaborative partners:

> L: Do you think it depends on the person, though?
> M: Oh certainly -- I think to some extent it depends on the person as well. But --
> L: Cause I know I've had consultants when I was teaching who would come in. I remember one -- a music consultant -- who would come in and take over and tell me what to do. And these little memories that I have from my own classroom teaching experience, I've tried to incorporate into the way that I've interacted -- And I sort of felt like "Just a darn minute. You may know quite a bit about music but I don't think that gives you the right to come into my classroom and take--
> C: --and take it over--
> L: And take it over." And not only the music -- She came in -- We used to have this music festival thing -- She came in and told me how to organize my choral speech, okay? And directed the kids to emphasize this syllable and that syllable. She just walked in and took over. And I thought "If I'm ever in a position where I'm going into somebody else's classroom, I will not do that." (Collaborative Meeting #5 - p.28)

Making connections to another aspect of my professional responsibilities provided an additional opportunity for me to develop respect for and appreciation of my collaborative partners. I was supervising student teachers when the research project began and connected this experience to my observation of Mary-Ellen's teaching:

> She reminded them there would be no dialogue in this first run-through and she would give them a 5-4-3-2-1 count down to get into places and begin. I couldn't help but remark to myself how smoothly and automatically an experienced teacher calls on these management and structuring strategies when I've just finished watching the student teachers work so hard at remembering and working with the same strategies. (Research Journal, December 5, 1997)

Mary-Ellen later remarked that these teaching skills were so reflex that she didn't even realize she was using them:

> M: It's instinctual. It's not even thought. I'm going "Did I do that? Gee, wasn't that clever of me! [laughter] Gee, I didn't know I did that. Did I make that reference back? Did I make that connection? I didn't know I did that." And, you know, when you're trying to work with student teachers you probably do -- You do -- you do that sort of thing all the time and how much of it do you intellectualize when you're debriefing a student teacher? I just wonder how much of it, after 24 years, has become so automatic that it doesn't -- I'm not sure what part of my mind it exists in -- Whether I'm -- when somebody observes me that they see these things. I'm just thinking of the student teachers. And how do you -- Oh this is a strategy that I use -- I don't think of it. I mean even the counting off. You make a comment about my counting off and getting them organized that way and this is an effective strategy. And -- it was just an automatic -- this is the best way to get them organized quickly. I'll just count them off. But why I do it -- I mean what are the educational values and the educational, pedagogical reasons that I'm doing it. I've long since lost that connection?
> (Planning with Mary-Ellen, January 15, 1998)

Thus, the connections I was making in the data I shared with Mary-Ellen allowed her to make connections within her own teaching practice and supported both of us in our development and growth as educators.

I experienced the theme of **constraint** in a very different way from either of my collaborative partners. I was not operating with the same constraints, either external or internal that they identified and discussed within the context of the research project. I was not afraid of using process drama strategies in the classroom with real students. Quite to the contrary, I welcomed the opportunity to work with real children, especially the younger ones, as I have missed the opportunity to do this in recent years. I was largely in command of my own time schedule with the exception of certain responsibilities as a graduate teaching assistant. These responsibilities, as previously mentioned, imposed very few constraints on my research work. But it was the very lack of constraints that created

an internal constraint I came to recognize in a gradual way over a period of months. I felt guilty.

I discussed these feelings with Mary-Ellen and Carol at our final collaborative meeting:

> L: You know it's interesting. There were times that I would come back from being at either school -- feeling guilty? Because I didn't have to be there all day. And I could do the fun stuff -- I could walk in and do the fun stuff and then-
> M: --Walk out and heave a sigh of relief -- "Thank god, I don't have to be there anymore. I can go home." [everyone laughs]
> L: No -- it was really an interesting feeling and I think that's one of things -- Like I've got to look at my own story as well as our collaborative story, as well as your story as well as students-- you know -- everybody's story. But that's one of the things that I have to look at in my own story is -- you know -- how that feeling -- where that feeling came from -- Like who did I think I was in this whole thing, you know? I can really see how I shifted back and forth between classroom teacher and then -- uh -- graduate student -- and then drama person -- You know -- all these things --
> M: Lion tamer --
> L: [laughs] I don't remember doing any of that! But no -- it's really interesting and I felt like I shouldn't ask any more of you and I wonder now--

What I wondered, although I didn't voice it at the time, was if I had shared enough of my own reactions to the classroom work. I wondered if I should have provided more of the evaluative comments that Carol kept asking me to provide. There were moments in both classrooms where I saw opportunities for the drama work to move to a deeper level of engagement for the students but I didn't always mention these moments to either Carol or Mary-Ellen as I didn't feel I had the right to push for more. I recorded very few of my own questions and concerns in my research journal since I shared all the data in this journal with the teachers and I didn't want to be discouraging or judgmental. I could find only two instances when I actually questioned teaching decisions or classroom practice in my research journal. One occurred in Mary-Ellen's room and the other in Carol's:

> I overheard Mary Ellen say to one group "Well, let's not worry about costumes so much as getting our lines done." I was glad to hear her say this as I found myself a little concerned that the students' preoccupation with costumes might detract from their focus on the development of their scenes and dialogue. I did discuss this issue with Mary Ellen after class. I'm not sure that encouraging the use of costumes is always a good idea. (Research Journal, March 16, 1998)

> Carol thought it might be fun to let them create props and redo Jimmy Jet next week with props in larger groups. We talked about the limits of pair interpretation of a

> poem -- how the students were limited to a set number of dramatic interpretations by the poet's words and how this could become repetitive when every pair was presenting the same poem. Carol noticed that I'd said this before. I wonder if I'm communicating that somehow it is <u>better</u> for students to go beyond the text and create something new rather than interpret what is there. I don't think that it is better but I do know I've come to think of drama and oral interpretation as two different things when they are not necessarily two different things in many peoples' minds. (Research Journal, March 6, 1998)

The fact that both these entries occur in March towards the end of the research project suggests that perhaps we were only beginning to develop enough trust and mutual respect to allow more challenges to the classroom work at this time. Fullan (1991) emphasizes that educational change is "a process, not an event" (p.49). Even though the research study was almost over in March, it is possible that process of change at a deeper level was just beginning. My role may have been less influenced by the constraint of my own guilt if this research study had been longer term and if both teachers had received system support and remuneration for their participation. But it is also possible that my feelings of guilt were a positive influence on my ability to let go of preconceived ideas about how drama <u>should</u> be taught and that such feelings allowed me to be open to celebrating the way drama <u>could</u> be taught by two talented and committed classroom teachers.

<u>"When Shall We Three Meet Again?" - A Story of Collaboration</u>

Mary-Ellen made the first allusion to *Macbeth* and Shakespeare's three witches during our first collaborative meeting in October:

> C: Are we meeting -- when?
> L: Okay.
> M: "When shall we three meet again? In thunder, lightening or in rain --"
> [laughter]
> L: Okay -- that's a good point. And what will we do in the interim?
> (Collaborative Meeting #1 - p.20)

We picked up on this quotation again at our second collaborative meeting:

> L: You're tired -- We're going to schedule -- We're going to start -- and the only other thing we need to do tonight is talk about when the three of us are going to get together again -- "When shall we three meet again?"
> C: In fire -- something or in rain --
> (Collaborative Meeting #2 - p.22)

"We three" met around the cauldron (which was actually a teapot) five times during the course of the research study, not to plot or scheme the downfall of a king, but rather to reflect upon our experiences with planning and implementing process drama teaching strategies within the context of English language arts instructional practice.

As previously mentioned, we agreed early in the research process that our time together as a threesome would be most productive if we used it for discussion and reflection that involved everyone. The differences between Carol's and Mary-Ellen's classroom contexts and experiential backgrounds with drama influenced our decision to conduct specific instructional planning in pairs. But we agreed that there would be something to be gained from meeting as a trio to reflect on the experiences we'd had. When all three of us were participating actively in such reflection, the themes that have been identified and explored in individual contexts played out in new and interesting ways.

Even though Carol and Mary-Ellen did not work directly with each other in classroom action during the course of the research study, their **concern** for each other's work was evident from the early stages of the research process. Mary-Ellen voiced her concern at the second meeting in October:

> C: About something we've experienced cause it's not going to be -- You know, once you're in your literature and once you're in mine -- I mean -- We're going to be seeing each other that day -- yeah. And then you're just going to journal about it and then pretty much it's going to be -- well pretty much it's just going to be between the two of you -- because you two experienced it -- And as an outsider -- you know -- I can't relate to your -- whatever you're writing about --
> L: How are we going to get ourselves --
> M: Actually you know that's a bit of a shame -- I can't experience what's happening in your classroom and you can't experience what's happening in mine.
>
> (Collaborative Meeting #2 - p.19)

Mary-Ellen suggested one way that she might share in Carol's experience at the third collaborative meeting:

> M: So you'll be in the same boat when it comes to -- So I can see that the three weeks that we're working together, we're going to need to meet separately -
> L: Oh, absolutely --

M: During and after and then perhaps once I've got one of these under my belt then it would be interesting to come back together and find out what you've -- You know I'm interested to find out --
C: What I did with mine --
M: What you did with yours and I'd like to hear tonight while it's still fresh. And then maybe later again when you've had more chance to reflect on it -- but -- then we could meet in January as a threesome -- and then I'll be getting ready to start something with the eights -- I hope. And you're going to be starting again. (Collaborative Meeting #3 - p.7)

I was interested to find out how Carol and Mary-Ellen perceived the contributions they had made to each other's work. When I asked them to reflect on this at our fourth meeting, they showed their concern for me:

L: Which is a question I'm asking the two of you so I'm saying "How have you been supported by -- how has Mary Ellen been supported by Carol, Carol by Mary Ellen?" And then me--
M: Oh and then you--
L: Yeah -- I've put myself off in a little category all on my own here. The researcher [laughs] I got quite formal with this.
M: Was that what you understood Carol?
C: No -- each other meant us as a group.
M: That's what I see it.
C: And then the researcher is this one-on-one interaction--
M: When we have the one-on-one--
L: Oh -- okay -- Well that's a neat way to see it.
C: Conversations or in the classroom--
M: That's why I said each other and the researcher all together-- Each other is the three of us together brainstorming. The researcher -- but you're part of that-- "You is part of us" [reference to the story Mary Ellen is using].
[everyone laughs]
L: You betcha!
M: And you is also you! Like our phone conversations.
C: Sure.
L: I like that. I like that.
M: You can use it.
L: U is part of us. Did you get that? [to tape recorder] U is part of us. Maybe I'll title my dissertation "U is part of Us".
C: Probably not but that's okay-- (Collaborative Meeting #4 - p.32)

They were able to more accurately describe how their concern for each other had contributed to their positive experience of the research process at our last meeting in April:

L: Okay -- I think we talked about collaborative action research too, didn't we?
C: Oh that was all that bonding stuff as opposed to consultants --
M: All that female bonding stuff [all laugh]
C: Whatever you want to call it -- whatever label -- but it was being able to work together -- help--
M: Help each other -- support each other -- And feel that we weren't alone struggling along in the darkness--
C: And we were -- going into the darkness --

M: But we were holding each other's hands and that was different--
C: Yeah -- it is -- than being alone with a book -- or alone with somebody who's sailing in and out -- (Collaborative Meeting #5 - p.27)

Although the issue of classroom management did not materialize as an issue for either Carol or Mary-Ellen in their individual stories, it was an issue of **constraint** that concerned them both at our first collaborative meeting:

C: -- how you build in the control strategies because I'm thinking of the implementation -- how I want to do this particular one. That's as far focused as I am right now.
L: Yeah
C: How do I want to deal with managing the personalities given that I know these kids and how they're going to react with each other -- as well as how they're going to react with the whole story that's given.
L: Yeah -- so
C: Cause there's personalities -- things that happen, you know with a lot of personalities -- that happen just in a classroom setting let alone when you put them in a particular group.
M: Then when you take away the normal controls of a classroom and put them into a creative --
C: -- environment --
M: -- setting. And when divorcing the two -- They're not necessarily divorced -- But once you start getting into the drama which -- I think even very young children -- have -- by osmosis -- picked up that drama is free
L: Yes.
M: And no holds barred.
L: and no holds barred.
M: No holds barred -- no restraints - And they don't understand what that means. I mean every artist knows that the amount of control is incredible in the theatre.

L: Well, I think there have to be some external signals -- and structures that you use with kids. I really do.
M: Carol, I think you start with some games -- just as Neelands did because drama is a game. It's the game of entertainment. We all love to be entertained and many of us love to be the ones that do the entertaining. But first start with some games and talk to them about what makes a game fun.
L: Rules -- rules give the game structure --
C: And you get to make up your own rules sometimes too -- if you're out on the playground --
M: But then once they're made up, everybody has to abide by them or the game is no fun anymore.

(Collaborative Meeting #1 - pp. 10-11)

We also discussed the institutional structure of schools as a constraint when we talked together as a collaborative group. Mary-Ellen compared her situation to Carol's at our final collaborative meeting:

M: Well I don't know if it's a function of the secondary level -- or maybe it's a function of the thinking of a secondary teacher -- I don't know. I hear Carol being maybe more spontaneous than I feel I am in approaching the process drama. I think that there are times when I'm teaching certain things where I think "Gee, I could do this or do that -- this would be a neat idea". And I feel the need to go for my plan -- and not just say to the kids "Okay -- let's do this." I'm not exactly sure why -- I'm not sure where that's coming from. Is that me -- is it a function of the material and the structure of secondary -- time limits -- I get forty minutes --Carol can take ten minutes from something else and she --

C: I've got a little bit more -- afternoon is afternoon --

M: You know -- Carol can give and take whereas I'm locked in -- and at the secondary level you are -- you're locked in -- forty minute, fifty minute blocks -- whatever they are -- You've got to work with that time frame and this particular material and what can you get done in this time frame -- and what else has to be covered? Not to say that you don't -- you do as well. But the flexibility from day to day -- I think is more conducive in some respects -- certainly to the kind of response that you had -- which was more almost impromptu and "let's stop now and do this".

(Collaborative Meeting #5 - p.4)

Mary-Ellen and Carol related the internal constraint of fear (that was discussed in relation to each teacher's individual experience) to the concept of change at our final meeting:

M: Yeah -- Whenever you mention the word change to anybody -- except maybe extreme right-brain types -- people become stressed. Like you say, it means going somewhere -- "to boldly go" -- split infinitive -- "where no man has gone before -- person has gone before" -- and

L: -- woman--

M: Yeah -- that too -- And that creates stress just in and of itself.

L: Yeah--

M: I think part of the stress -- and that is something that you don't address here that you might want to address -- Carol and I were embarking on -- we were going where no person has gone before -- Well for us it was where no person had gone before--

C: Right--

L: Mmm hmm--

M: We were on our own little Enterprise-- And you were our Captain Kirk.

L: Okay -- Captain Kirk, hey? [laughs]

M: I saw him on TV the other day and has he put on weight. He's such a pompous twit.

[laughter]

M: Anyway --

L: I thank you--

M: No, no, no -- William Shatner --

L: I want to be Mr. Spock--

M: No -- William Shatner is a pompous twit --Of course Captain Kirk was too -- Anyway that's a complete sidetrack -- But there's the whole stress of going into the unknown -- And that was a stress -- whether we voiced it at any point -- Maybe our voicing our other stresses was -- the stress of going into the unknown -- was -- What am I trying to get at here--?

[all talk at once]

C: There were other stresses but really the headline topic was the unknown --

M: Really -- that's right --
C: We've never been on this path -- we've never been on this walk before--
M: So this was an added stress on top of the rest of the work we already had to do -- which -- you know --
C: I think that's a good concept -- the idea of change and what that means to you energy wise--

(Collaborative Meeting #5 - pp. 15-16)

This conversation helped to put all the other constraints that were discussed and identified in each teacher's individual story into a new perspective. This perspective might not have achieved had it not been for honest interaction that resulted from the trust we had established in our collaborative group.

Although most of the **creativity** generated in our planning and instructional practice occurred in researcher-teacher pairs, there were a few instances of creative planning which occurred in our collaborative group. One instance is particularly illustrative of the potential for creative idea-generation that can occur in the collaborative context:

C: And then calling in all these people in this little guy's life that have touched him. Or that have -- you know -- that they've got six or seven --
M: That could have maybe helped him --
C: That could have touched his life.
M: -- kept him from joining that gang --
C: -- way back even. Not just even in the most recent history or in the last five years or so. Since he was ten years old because I imagine he's about sixteen?
M: -- about sixteen --
C: And then that throws it out to a neutral individual that isn't invested in that particular scene. The newspaper reporter is because --
M: He's structured --
C: -- and it's his turf, right? And he wants --
L: He wants something out of it -- yeah.

(Collaborative Meeting #3 - p.19)

Since this conversation related to Mary-Ellen's plans for "On the Sidewalk, Bleeding", Carol was contributing ideas to a plan that would not benefit her directly. In our particular collaborative group, this type of three-way creative planning would always leave someone to contribute from a position of altruistic concern for others rather than from a position of self-interest. If Mary-Ellen and Carol had been working with students at the same grade level or with the same selections of literature, we would probably have engaged in a great deal more creative planning within the context of our collaborative group.

There were moments, however, when we celebrated our individual or pair-generated creative achievements in the collaborative group. These moments allowed Carol and Mary-Ellen to make **connections** between events in each of their classrooms:

> C: We had to explain more -- we had to explain -- I'm trying to think back now --
> L: We wrote the poem -- we wrote the plaque and we did it --
> C: We did a little poem on the post -- and then we exemplified it --
> L: Yeah -- we showed it to them -- we performed it for them right in front of the class --
> C: So that gave them more ideas cause they had not seen that kind of a --
> L: They didn't know what we were talking about --
> M: You were role models for them --
> L: We modeled it -- And that was on the spur of the moment -- in response to the fact that they didn't get it. They weren't sure --
> M: Like something like what I did with my nines --
> L: Yes!
> M: When I said you can bring a tableau to life and I saw question marks on faces. That was totally impromptu --
> L: Yeah -- and you just showed it to them -- Yeah and that's part of that -- where are they at? Reading them-- you know?
>
> (Collaborative Meeting #5 - p.5)

Mary-Ellen summarized the beneficial influences of our three-way collaboration on her own creative process and ability to make connections during our third meeting:

> M: No -- well yes. The last thing I want to say is that the plus side of meeting together is exactly what happened tonight. Listening to somebody else talk and suddenly getting an idea from what that person has said.
> L: So there <u>is</u> a benefit in the three of us meeting.
> M: Mmm hmm, mmm hmm -- even though we may be very diverse -- divergent -- come from very different backgrounds with different experience probably. That doesn't mean that I can't learn from something Carol is doing -- or even a question that Carol asks -- that I try to answer -- and in answering her question or query leads me to something else -- There's always that can happen -- (Collaborative Meeting #3 - p.26)

One of the most interesting examples of the theme of **authority** that emerged within our collaborative group revolved around a discussion of the "teacher-in-role" drama convention. I perceive the "teacher-in-role" strategy as providing an opportunity for the teacher to guide the drama from within and challenge the students to problem-solve and think critically. Mary-Ellen suggested that this convention was manipulative and controlling and Carol tended to agree with her. The following example reveals the theme of authority operating on two levels. First of all, teacher authority in the classroom

comprises the content of the discussion. Secondly, my "authority" as "drama expert" is quite expertly challenged by my collaborative partners:

> M: And the teacher-in-role can really manipulate the situation.
> L: Mmm hmm--
> M: Which may be good and which may not --
> L: Okay--
> M: Does that then stultify creativity in the kids -- are they feeling harnessed in some way?
> L: It depends on how the teacher is using the role, doesn't it?
> M: I think that the very fact that the teacher is in role, period.
> L: Well --
> M: --has its influence--
> C: --influence.
> M: Regardless of how the teacher actually uses the role, the kids logically perceive that -- they are still being controlled by the adult in the room.
> L: If the teacher takes an authority role. But you don't have to take an authority role. You can take a -- you can take any -- Morgan and Saxton have seven or eight different teacher roles set out. You can be the victim -- you can be the intermediary -- the person who comes along and just conveys information, you know? "I'm the appointee from the king and this is what the king wants you people to do. Are you going to do it or not?" But -- at the same time -- the leader role -- I think Neelands used that role with us a lot. But at the same time it's not the only role. You can give the kids total control. You can give them control of the drama -- which you may or may not want to do--
> M: You see this is what I wonder, Carol -- and I'll throw it back to you -- the very fact that the teacher is involved in an active form -- no matter what the position of the character that they're playing -- I wonder how that affects the kids psychologically?
> C: Well -- I'm thinking of just my own classroom. They see me all day long. They do get another person for gym and art but generally I'm it. And so -- if you were the person who's relaying the message -- the king's appointee, for example, in a fairy tale -- possibly you could pull that off. But I guess with the kids that I deal with -- that I dealt with this year -- I was perfectly content to give them their groups and their freedom to work with what they had to work with -- becoming robots or whatever they were doing. And I was there -- yes for the control signal -- the lights or whatever it was to draw them back and show each other our little dramas. But I wasn't there as a role person to try and influence them. I guess I liked them to be -- like their own group--
>
> (Collaborative Meeting #5 - p.8)

This exchange of ideas suggests that the role of educational drama "authority" I had played during the early weeks of the research study was changing. Mary-Ellen, Carol and I had transformed our relationships so that authority was shared by all members of the group and we could freely debate ideas and argue from our own perspectives. This was an outcome I had hoped would be achieved by the end of the action research process.

A new perspective on the theme of **accountability** also emerged from our collaborative conversation at the midpoint of the research process. In previous meetings and in our pair conversations we'd talked about being accountable to a number of outside influences. It was in our fourth collaborative meeting that our feelings of accountability to each other emerged in concrete terms:

> M: But, no -- I wouldn't have--
> L: So having an outside person coming in --
> C: Gives that accountability, I think?
> M: You got it.
> C: You feel like you do owe it to the group.
> M: And that's what I kept thinking of her. I kept thinking about Linda and I kept thinking about her research and I kept thinking "this has got to be good cause this is her dissertation".
> C: Right--
> M: I'm not just doing this for the kids.
> L: Oh but it should be for the kids.
> C: Well it is--
> M: It is for the kids but--
> C: --but the accountability-- to make you bounce back and just keep working -- and trying -- and not give up.
> M: It's not just the kids, Linda.
> L: No, I guess it isn't just the kids --
> M: That was wonderful for them and they got a big plus because I was pushed to it -- because I'd made a commitment to somebody else. It's easy to make a commitment to yourself and then back off.
>
> (Collaborative Meeting #4 - p.34)

Further along in this conversation, Carol and Mary-Ellen related this newly acknowledged issue of accountability to the importance of the relationships we had established:

> C: Well this is the only reference I know -- is committing myself to you and saying well I do have this year -- even though I know it will be a sacrifice of my time -- and risk -- big risk -- But it was a commitment to another human being instead of being told -
> M: You've got all this time--
> C: Here's the library and here's the time and go --
> M: And I'm sure you could do something--
> C: Oh yeah, for sure. But the human factor of a relationship --
> M: You're working alone -- You're working then in isolation --
> C: And you may visit somebody -- You may visit the David Booth or whatever -- or have the summer school again with Jonothon Neelands but -- it's the --
> M: It's not the same -- as the accountability of having to show up and tell Linda what we have and have not done. Or what we're planning on doing.
> C: It's really grass roots.
> M: It's that pressure--
> C: It's more practical --
> M: It's the pressure -- It's the being accountable which creates a kind of pressure -- "I must do this. I have somebody who--"

C: --who's counting on me?
M: -- who's counting on me.
L: Okay--
M: Which I think is a real teacher thing.
L: Yeah -- I guess it is. (Collaborative Meeting #4 - p. 37)

This conversation created a moment of **praxis** for me in that I realized all the research I had read on school-university partnerships was being borne out and validated in my own experience. What is important -- what is crucial to the success of a research study such as this one -- are the qualities of trust, respect and commitment that participants develop with each other.

Conclusion

The collective creation of this research project involved Carol, Mary-Ellen, me and the students in a seven month process of planning, active experimentation, and reflection. I have highlighted seven themes to trace and focus our experience of growth and learning through our individual stories and through the story of our collaborative group. Themes that have provided focus for my interpretation of our experience include: accountability, constraint, authority, creativity, concern, connections and praxis.

Fullan (1991) suggests **interaction** as an important foundation that must be present for real learning to occur in educational change initiatives. He further describes conditions that create a positive climate for interaction and innovation:

> "Learning by doing, concrete role models, meetings with resource consultants and fellow implementers, practice of the behavior, and the fits and starts of cumulative, ambivalent, gradual self-confidence all constitute a process of coming to see the meaning of change more clearly" (Fullan, 1991, p.85)

Fullan's description encapsulates conditions that existed in our collaborative action research study from its inception in the summer of 1997 to its conclusion in April of 1998. Positive growth and change occurred for each one of us, although the nature of the change and the way we each perceived the changes within ourselves differed with each individual.

Carol saw herself change from a "greenhorn" into a teacher who is comfortable and confident incorporating process drama strategies into her instructional practice. Mary-Ellen experienced herself as being more open to new opportunities and more focused on the exact

nature of the academic work she wants to pursue in her graduate program. I expanded my understanding of the scope of action research as a living practice and broadened my conception of where classroom drama might locate itself upon the process/performance continuum. And perhaps even more important than these changes, we each learned that collaborative action research can provide a vehicle for a collective creation borne out of positive, supportive and encouraging relationship.

The implications of these individual and collective discoveries within the broader context of educational drama/English language arts research and school-university partnership research will create the focus for the concluding chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

CURTAIN CALL

Introduction

When a traditional play ends, the actors move to centre stage, take their bows and then return to their dressing rooms to remove make-up, costumes and to become themselves again. The curtain call is a usually brief moment in which their interpretive work is acknowledged only by the audience's non-verbal applause. It is left to the audience to construct their own meaning of the play's message without any further help from the actors.

It has become common practice when a collective creation is presented to an audience, however, to move beyond this brief moment of non-verbal communication between audience and actors into a discussion period where actors and audience sit down together to talk with each other about the play. This practice is especially common when the play has dealt with some social issue that is of common concern to both groups. Since the collective play was created out of the actors' insights, beliefs and experiences, the actors are able to clarify their purposes, answer questions and respond to audience feedback from a position of joint ownership of the work. Such engagement between audience and actors extends the curtain call ritual to include an opportunity to locate the meaning of a collectively created play within a broader societal framework.

I will similarly attempt, in this concluding chapter, to locate the collective creation of our collaborative action research study within the broader framework of school-university partnership research and research related to teachers' use of educational drama structures within their classroom instructional practice. I will also discuss the unique implications of this particular research project for future research studies in both of these research areas. As a preliminary grounding bridge to this discussion, however, I will review the research questions which guided this study in relation to the themes which emerged during the analysis of the data.

Review of the Research Questions in Relation to Themes

The research questions which encompassed the unfolding process of inquiry, reflection and construction of meaning among the three members of our collaborative group are restated below with each question followed by suggested connections to the themes which emerged from the data analysis.

Research Question #1: What understandings do teachers articulate through language (written and oral) and action (instructional practice) of their own personal and professional growth and the changes in knowledge, attitudes and instructional practice that relate to their experience:

a) in the University of Alberta summer school course, International Studies in Process Drama?

b) of participating in collaborative meetings with the researcher which utilize the action research cycle of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Carson, Conners, Ripley & Smits, 1990)?

c) of engaging the researcher as a professional resource and service provider according to their own needs and interests?

Mary-Ellen and Carol articulated changes in their understanding of the place of process drama in their English language arts programs throughout the duration of the research study. The **connections** they made between their own instructional practice and strategies they had learned about during the summer course, International Studies in Process Drama, contributed to these changes and allowed them to experience moments of **praxis** on several occasions. They used ideas from the summer school class, from my suggestions, from their own experience, and from the educational drama resources I provided as the sources of **authority** to support their own **creative** development of instructional action plans. The **constraints** of curriculum requirements, fear, lack of time, and **accountability** to stakeholders outside the research process did limit the amount of time and energy that both teachers were able to invest in the research study but these

limitations did not become the insurmountable barriers to growth they might have been. Both Mary-Ellen and Carol identified their **accountability** to me and to their students as influencing them to remain committed to the research study in spite of these limitations. The theme of **commitment** is not identified as a specific research theme because it permeated and influenced all aspects of both teachers' attitudes and approaches to the research work. Through their **concern** for the well-being of their students, for the success of my research study, and for each other, they created a sense of commitment to the collaborative group which supported them and encouraged them when other constraints were creating feelings of stress and discouragement. The importance of commitment to collaborative relationships as an agent of teacher change and growth cannot be overemphasized.

> Research Question #2: What understandings does the researcher articulate through language (written and oral) and action (instructional practice) of her own personal and professional growth and changes in knowledge, attitudes and instructional practice that relate to her collaborative work with participating teachers as all participants co-construct her role in the research process?

My own **commitment** to supporting Mary-Ellen and Carol as they experimented with integrating process drama teaching strategies into their English language arts programs allowed me to grow as a researcher, as an educational drama practitioner and as a teacher educator. Although my sense of **accountability** to the **authority** represented by the theoretical base supporting educational drama pedagogy sometimes created a dialectic tension with my **concern** for both teachers' welfare, this tension emerged as a positive instigator to my own change and growth. The tension opened up opportunities for me to make **connections** between my existing understanding of educational drama pedagogy and new possibilities suggested by my collaborating partners. These connections broadened my perceptions of how educational drama could be integrated into the English

language arts and extended the range of my own **creative** generation of ideas for using educational drama structures to mediate students' response to literature. I, therefore, experienced my own moments of **praxis** throughout the duration of the research process.

> Research Question #3: What factors appear to influence the perceptions of all participants (students, teachers, and researcher) regarding their responses to planning, action (classroom instructional practice in educational drama in the English language arts) and reflection throughout the course of the research project?

Although the parameters established for this research study limit the attention I have been able to give to student voices, the accumulated data base provided by Grade 8 and 9 students' written responses do provide research opportunities for both Mary-Ellen and me to pay closer attention to these voices in future analysis. The written and oral responses of all students in Grades 4, 5, 6, 8 and 9, indicate that they perceived the educational drama experiences which resulted from our collaborative action plans as very positive learning opportunities. Students suggested that the usual **constraints** of classroom instruction in the English language arts (i.e. working with pencils and paper in desks) were removed during their drama work, thus freeing them to identify more closely with the characters in the stories we explored. The opportunity to work in a different instructional space, the drama room, seemed to be a factor that encouraged the junior high students to work collaboratively and **creatively.**

Students were given the opportunity in both Carol's and Mary-Ellen's classrooms to plan their drama work in groups, to act out their understanding of stories through drama, and to reflect on the process in writing or discussion after the dramas ended. Thus, educational drama work provided the students with the chance to engage in their own experience of collaborative action research related to **connecting** their personal experiences and understandings with the experiences of the characters in the stories they studied. The same sense of commitment to a shared purpose that characterized the teacher-

researcher collaboration was evident in the work the students did. One might surmise that many of the factors which have already been discussed in relation to the teachers' and the researcher's growth in understanding were also operating for the students as they engaged in their own collaborations. This speculation, however, requires a deeper level of exploration and analysis and may be considered to be an implication for further research in the future.

The focus of the research questions which guided this study was to determine how teachers might be encouraged to develop and change their teaching practice to include educational drama teaching strategies in their instructional repertoires. The analysis of the data provides answers which are contextually specific to Carol's, Mary-Ellen's and my own experience but perhaps our stories may inform and support other teachers and researchers who wish to pursue similar questions in future collaborative action research studies.

Meeting in the Spaces Between School and University

My review of the literature relating to school-university partnership research alerted me to a variety of pitfalls or problems that might present themselves during the course of my collaborative work with two school-based educators. Many of the possible problems did not materialize during my work with Mary-Ellen and Carol. A few of the problems did arise but most of these were resolved. The following subjective explanation suggests some of the contextual elements that may have prevented some problems from arising and possibly influenced the solution of others.

Although I had attended to the cautionary warnings about issues of status and authority interfering with true collaboration between teachers and university-based researchers (Clark, 1988; Feldman, 1993; Tom, 1996), these issues did not create problems in this research study. Carol, Mary-Ellen and I met five times as a group and all five meetings were conducted in my home. The physical location of our collaboration outside the confines of school or university created a neutral context where our professional

designations as "teacher" or "university researcher" were not reinforced by institutional surroundings. We were educators together; educators who had shared the experience of being students together in a summer school class. The initiation of the research from our shared experience of process drama rather than from institutional mandates or expectations and the environmental context of our collaboration may well have contributed to creating the kind of partnership of equals that characterized our work together.

Another factor that may have contributed to our successful collaboration was the size of our collaborative group. Fullan (1991) stresses "it is only at the individual and small group level that the inevitable demands of overload can be prioritized and integrated" (p.49). Before the summer school class, I had envisioned forming a collaborative group with five or six teachers. When I review the amount of time the three of us invested in scheduling time for classroom work and collaborative meetings, I realize that a larger group would have experienced even greater difficulties in finding time to work together.

Clark's (1988) suggestion that university personnel frequently experience a minimal investment in the teachers' classroom work did not apply to our collaborative research study. Perhaps this was the case because Goodlad's (1988) conditions for successful school-university partnerships were firmly established within our collaborative group. We had a) dissimilar purposes, b) sufficient selflessness on the part of all participants, and c) we were able to mutually satisfy our own self-interests within the context of the action research process (p.14). Mary-Ellen reflected on the concept of "symbiosis" at our final collaborative meeting when we discussed the differences between our collaborative project and the support offered by school system consultants:

> M: But they come in -- they say "Oh, try this, try this and try this" -- and they walk away -- they never come back. And they're being paid -- And that's a totally different ball of wax. You [to me] had a stake in this. You were investing in us so it was a symbiotic relationship. We had made a promise to you. That promise to you was an investment in our own work and in our own students. You had an investment in what we did because it was part of work that you were doing. So I mean -- all the hands washed each other. A consultant doesn't have that kind of bond. It's not that kind of responsibility -- it's not that kind of relationship. It's a "try this, try this and try this" and they walk out and they don't come back. You had to come

> back. You had to write down things that were said in class. You had to talk that over with us. A consultant doesn't do that sort of thing.
> (Collaborative Meeting #5 - p.19)

This comment suggests that consultant-supported initiatives to implement curriculum innovations may meet with resistance when teachers do not feel that the consultant has any personal investment in the teacher's success or failure in using new teaching strategies. The same teacher attitudes may certainly be present if a university researcher does not make a clear expression of investment in the teachers' work and professional growth.

Our investment of time, energy and concern for each other did result in many of the benefits that have been identified in the literature as resulting from school-university partnership research. We developed a strong sense of community and shared purpose (Lieberman, 1986; Hord, 1986; Calhoun, 1993, Macaul et al, 1994; Johnson et al, 1994). This sense of community may have been most clearly revealed in the "you is part of us" conversation which was included in the previous chapter. Carol and Mary-Ellen both reflected that they were more willing to take risks and experiment with drama strategies because of the support of our collaborative group (Lieberman, 1992; Johnson et al, 1994; Christensen et al, 1994). All three of us celebrated the opportunities the research project provided for us to exercise our own unique styles of creativity (Lieberman, 1986; Macaul et al, 1994; Johnson et al, 1994). Each one of us also achieved moments of praxis within the context of our classroom action and collaborative conversation (Schlechty & Whitford, 1988; Lieberman, 1992; Catelli, 1995; Lieberman and Grolnick, 1996).

There were issues that are addressed in the school-university partnership literature, however, that did present challenges to our group. As mentioned in the previous chapter, issues of **accountability** and **constraint** created stress for both Carol and Mary-Ellen as they worked towards achieving the action plans we created collaboratively. Most of these issues related directly to the amount of time that both teachers could find to work on the research project. Several school-university partnership researchers stress that university personnel must be especially sensitive to teachers' lack of time for research (Little, 1987;

Raywid, 1993; Johnson et al, 1994; Joyce & Showers, 1995; Christensen et al, 1996; Tom, 1996).

Although the research study extended over a period of seven months, both Carol and Mary-Ellen were able to devote only relatively short blocks of classroom time to working with drama strategies in the English language arts. A calculation of the actual number of hours each teacher spent working with drama strategies (when I was present in the classroom) indicates that Carol spent approximately twenty-one hours of classroom time on the research project . Since I taught a demonstration unit for eight of those hours, Carol taught thirteen hours out of the total time. Mary-Ellen devoted approximately seventeen hours of instructional time to the research project. Mary-Ellen frequently expressed her wish to be able to spend more time integrating drama structures into her English language arts program since she felt both she and her students had derived important benefits from their work with process drama structures. But both teachers were very aware of their responsibility to deliver the provincial curriculum to their students so that the students would be adequately prepared to write provincial achievement tests. Their sense of being accountable to the official curriculum may have been the single most influential factor in limiting the amount of time they were willing to devote to integrating drama into their classroom programs.

Another time limitation that may affect the success of our collaborative work together over the long term was the duration of the research project. Fullan (1991) suggests that teachers change their instructional practice in lasting ways when they are supported through three stages of change: initiation, implementation and continuation. Although our collaboration extended over sufficient time to allow teachers to initiate and implement drama teaching strategies in their English language arts programs, events in each of our lives will prevent us from maintaining ongoing collaborative support through the continuation stage. Since I will be leaving the city and Mary-Ellen is leaving the classroom to return to graduate school, Carol is the only member of our group who will remain in the

classroom context beyond this school year. It is my intention to remain in contact with both Mary-Ellen and Carol but long distance contact cannot provide the direct, ongoing support that Fullan recommends will ensure continuation of innovations over the long-term.

School-university partnership researchers also identify lack of funding and administrative support as a barrier to successful collaboration (King & Lonnequist 1994; Osborne & Shipley 1995; Joyce & Showers 1996; Lieberman & Grolnick 1996). Our collaborative work, because it was undertaken to fulfill the requirements for my doctoral dissertation, received no financial support and passive administrative support. But the lack of external support may not have been the serious constraint to success represented in the literature. I asked both Mary-Ellen and Carol to speculate about how things might be different if they did have enough time to focus their energy more specifically on research related tasks and purposes. Their responses suggest that, although outside support is an important issue, it was not the most important issue to these two teachers:

> L: --Okay -- let's play a fantasy game and say if we were going to start all over again from point one -- and had unlimited resources -- in funding and support -- from on high -- what would we have done differently? So far.
> M: You know what?
> L: What would you do?
> M: You know what? I think -- this is a really weird thing about human nature. If we had the million dollars -- we wouldn't do it. If we had it all -- if we had all the support and all the resource materials -- and all the -- I don't think that we would --
> C: -- that we would implement it --
> M: I don't think we would --
> L: You wouldn't buy into it -- is that what you're saying?
> M: I don't think that we would be driven the same way. We wouldn't be motivated in the same way. That struggle wouldn't be there. Do you know what I'm saying?
> C: We're taking ownership of it. Owning it and saying "this is what we're going to do--"
> L: What would you do though?
> M: Isn't that the weirdest thing about human nature? I just don't think -- if the struggle is not there -- that you rise to the occasion quite the same way. I think we probably could do it but I don't know if we would have done it the same way or -- with the same intensity. Because it was a struggle -- and part of the enjoyment was that it was a struggle and we conquered it and we did it and we could stand up afterwards and say "We did it. I did it. They did it. We did it." It's great.
>
> (Collaborative Meeting #4 - p.34)

An even more important factor than support, then, was the sense of ownership that was possible for both Mary-Ellen and Carol within the context of our collaborative action research project. This sense of ownership may have resulted, in part, from the ethic of care or **concern** that characterized our work together.

Noddings (1984) explains how we must treat our teachers if we expect them to be innovative and creative within the classroom:

> We know that teachers are, with students, the heart of the educational process. We know, also, that all sorts of changes and innovations have been effectively blocked, ended, or distorted behind the classroom door. But we still persist in asking how we can crash through this blockade -- how we can get teachers to adopt the methods and practices we think they should use. Perhaps we should try more seriously to find out what they are doing, and to work cooperatively with them toward perfecting the methods to which they are devoted and in which they reveal their talent (p.197).

Carol, Mary-Ellen and I did take the time to listen to each other and work cooperatively towards our individual and our common purposes. This quality of our work together may have been the single most important influence in creating a successful and positive experience for all of us.

Joyce and Showers (1995) suggest that the real indicator of successful collaborative research between university personnel and school-based teachers is the positive response of the students in the classroom. Student voices have been introduced only incidentally into the discussion thus far because to explore their responses in appropriate depth would fall beyond the parameters of this study. I include two representative voices from Mary-Ellen's classrooms (one from Grade 9C and one from Grade 8B) and one from Carol's classroom to indicate the benefits the students perceived they had derived from participating in the instructional plans their teachers created:

> I liked the idea of incorporating drama with the story. This helped me to look deeper into the minds and lives of the characters which enabled me to discover more of the theme created. (Katie - 9C)

> From doing these monologues I can get a feel of how the characters act and what the story would look like for real. Therefore, this experience has taught me a lot. (Brendan - 8B)

> I felt like I was not in school. I felt as if I were in a new world, as if it was summer and no school was even there. I felt like it was normal when we were acting as if we were in that world all the time. I liked it because it was fun and it helped me learn about the characters. I also liked it because everyone got to be someone they liked. (Jesse - Grade 5)

These particular student comments are included, not because they are exceptional, but because they are representative of the very positive attitudes the students in all three classroom groups expressed about their work with process drama conventions in the English language arts. Their responses suggest that this collaborative action research study has implications that go beyond extending the school-university partnership research base. Our work together illuminates considerations that are specific to the ways drama practitioners and researchers can support teachers who want to integrate process drama conventions into their classroom instructional practice.

Teaching with Drama: You **can** get there from here!

Educational drama theoreticians and practitioners have written extensively and passionately about the lack of educational drama work in the majority of school classrooms (O'Neill 1983; Robinson 1983; O'Hara 1984; Wright 1985; Collins 1992). Survey researchers have confirmed that even though classroom teachers value educational drama as a viable teaching methodology, the majority of teachers do not feel prepared to teach with drama themselves (Stewig 1984; Kaaland-Wells 1994; Hundert 1996). Perhaps specialists in the field of educational drama should scrutinize their own expectations of what teachers can realistically do in relation to the demands that teaching with drama places on teachers.

Teaching with drama requires a lot from teachers. Ross (1992) describes the extra demands that this instructional practice places on the teacher's skill:

> Usual distinctions of status and authority are therefore blurred. In making meaning with students rather than dispensing it to them, the role of the teacher is redefined. This role now requires a double attendance on students. In the ordinary world of the classroom, the teacher is already called to attend on students, to support their efforts, to enable their becoming. Within the imaginatively created world of the drama, these concerns are now compounded by another, for the teacher must also remain sensitive to and supportive of those roles and situations into which the students have entered (p.149).

As this excerpt indicates, one cannot rely on standard teaching practices when one takes the risk and enters the "as if" world of drama space and drama time (Neelands, 1990).

In consideration of all of the other demands that teachers must face in today's overcrowded and underfunded schools, it is little wonder then that many teachers do what my collaborative partners said they would probably do without the support and pressure of our research project:

> L: Do you feel that -- I don't know -- Would you have done it -- here's the question -- here's the nitty gritty question -- Would you have done what you've done if you hadn't been doing this research project?
> M & C: No. [everyone laughs]
> L: Wow.
> C: I would have done some -- like I would have implemented the tableau -- cause I felt safe with that. And I maybe would have implemented what I just did Friday with this robot thing because we have to do some kind of a -- what did I say -- manufacturing sequence?
> L: Yeah -- production line --
> C: So -- production line -- for making something and creating something hands on. So then I could have probably done some body movement with that.
> L: Okay --
> C: So I probably would have done a few things from just the July class.
> L: Okay-- What about you? [to Mary Ellen]
> M: You heard what she said -- she's right on. I might have done the tableaux with the nines. I don't know if I would have gone the whole hog for that. I got excited.
> [everyone laughs]
> L: Woo!
> C: You have this effect on people--
> L: Oh my gosh!
> M: Delete that from the transcript--
> L: No -- I like that --
> M: No I don't think I would have gone the whole hog-- I had to. I'd made a commitment to you and I'd made a commitment without knowing it I'd made a commitment in my mind that I was going to do the best possible job I could so that your research would look glorious. But -- if I hadn't had that impetus behind me -- I mean when things started crashing around me -- with the workload and the health and -- I might have just said "Aw -- screw it." (Collaborative Meeting #4 - p.33)

Drama practitioners who truly believe in the power of educational drama to release and encourage children's imaginations and engagement with books and have a passionate commitment to extending the practice of educational drama in school classrooms must find a way to interrupt the "Aw, screw its" before they happen.

Those researchers who have entered classrooms and documented the experience of teachers interested in teaching with drama present some possible pathways to this interruption (Garcia 1993, 1996; Edwards & Payne, 1994; Flynn & Carr, 1994). Many of their suggestions and recommendations resonate with my own action research experience. Garcia (1996) stresses the importance of helping a teacher to find compatibility between drama teaching strategies and that teacher's own philosophy of education. As mentioned earlier, my own teaching philosophy was not always consistent with Carol's or Mary-Ellen's beliefs about where or how drama could fit into their English language arts programs. As the research study progressed, however, I learned to resist "preaching and teaching" from my own perspective and to open my mind to other ways of working with drama in the classroom. The consequence of this decision was that I expanded my own conceptions about the epistemology of educational drama.

As previously mentioned, I entered this research study believing that process drama was somehow superior to performance-oriented drama teaching methods. Mary-Ellen resisted my early pronouncements about the value of process over performance and worked with a performance orientation throughout the research study. When I watched her work with her students and challenge them to a fully embodied representation of their characters and scenes, I realized that the power of performance can be a strong motivator to engage students' minds and imaginations. Mary-Ellen used her own talents and experience with drama and English language arts as the base, and integrated process drama strategies into her existing framework in a way that was consistent with her philosophy of teaching. Her students' very positive responses to their experience of drama in their English language arts classes and the powerful, emotionally engaged content of the writing they did in response to the drama work and the short stories confirmed my realization that Mary-Ellen knew exactly what she was doing.

Carol also knew exactly what she was doing in her classroom and I came to realize that she had as much to teach me as I had to teach her. Her self-defined status as the

"greenie" of the group created a space for me to become the "mentoring expert". I did enjoy this role but Carol helped me to recognize the dangers inherent in extending the mentoring role beyond its optimum level of service to teachers who are just beginning to experiment with drama teaching strategies. Carol valued my demonstration teaching and modeling of drama teaching strategies with her students but she also communicated clearly that my style would not work for her. She wanted drama teaching strategies to serve her needs and her students' needs in a more spontaneous and incidental fashion. She did not want to spend extended periods of time working with one selection of literature. If I had insisted that Carol adopt my teaching style and my approach to working with drama in the English language arts, I feel quite sure that she would not have felt supported to grow and develop her own teaching style and an approach to working with drama strategies that was consistent with her teaching philosophy.

When we teach with drama structures, we use our total selves as the primary "tool" of instruction, perhaps more than in any other method of teaching. We move, speak, think and feel within "drama time" at the same time as we are working with our students in "real time". It follows, then, that the teacher's sense of self is heavily invested in teaching with drama. Other researchers have emphasized how important it is for drama specialists and mentors to honour the teacher's sense of self when supporting them to work with drama teaching strategies. Edwards and Payne (1994) suggest that appropriate support and recognition were the most important factors influencing the teachers in their support group to feel confident as "drama experts". Garcia (1996) emphatically states his perspective on the issue of how to support teachers who are engaged in learning to teach with drama:

> Those who do not assist teachers in finding compatibility between drama activities and teaching philosophies may only create problems and impediments. While providing additional stimulation, guidance or assistance, specialists should exhibit *respect* for teachers who assume responsibility for what occurs in their classrooms (p.11).

When drama specialists are prepared to enter classrooms with open minds and respect for the courage teachers are displaying when they agree to experiment with drama teaching

strategies, we may find more teachers who are prepared to take the risk of "teaching with drama". Courtney (1988) exemplifies the level of understanding that will allow drama specialists to develop such attitudes:

> In other words, drama teachers must accept a plurality of contexts. The students we teach all operate with the double process but how they do so varies considerably. One method of teaching is not necessarily better than another in an absolute sense. What is important is to find the appropriate method for THIS class at THIS moment with THIS teacher (p.31).

My experience of working with Carol and Mary-Ellen did not necessarily change the way I work and will continue to work with drama structures and conventions in my own practice. I have developed my own drama teaching style over a period of several years and enjoy the challenge of pushing myself to take new risks and experiment with the many strategies that I have read about, witnessed or experienced at drama workshops and at conferences. In addition to being a teacher, I am also an actor and these skills support me in using the teacher-in-role strategy comfortably and confidently. I will continue to use this strategy with students but I will also be more sensitive to the concerns Mary-Ellen and Carol expressed about teachers working in role. In other words, the collaborative research we did together does not lead me to replace or change my own practice but it does expand my awareness of the implications of different strategies and approaches in terms of the power relations that may be inherent in my own style of working. Thus, I have been moved to a new level of awareness of my own practice by working with school-based educators. Such awareness and growth may only be available to drama specialists and practitioners who are willing to make themselves and their practice open to the same process of scrutiny and suggestion they impose on the teachers they mentor and guide.

Implications for Future Research

The collective creation that emerged from our collaborative research study confirms many of the findings and implications that have been suggested by school-university partnership researchers and qualitative researchers working with teachers as they experiment with drama teaching strategies. There are implications, however, that are

specific to the context of this study. These implications may inform and expand the grounded theoretical base for future research in the area of supporting teachers to work with educational drama.

One characteristic that may be unique to this research study was the diversity of contexts within which the three collaborators conducted their instructional practice. Carol teaches in a small classroom with eighteen students in Grades 4, 5, and 6. Mary-Ellen teaches several classroom groups of Grade 8 and 9 students with enrollments of twenty-seven to thirty-one students per group. I teach pre-service teachers at the university level. Although this diversity did limit the amount and degree of collaborative instructional planning we could do as a three member group, it may also have contributed to the level of reflectivity we achieved in our action research process.

Knight et al (1992) suggest that the reflectivity-activity dilemma presents university researchers and school-based teachers who are working together with possible conflicts of purpose and style. Because Carol, Mary-Ellen and I decided early in the research process that we would conduct the activity portion of our work (instructional planning and classroom action) in teacher-researcher dyads, our third, fourth and fifth collaborative meetings were devoted almost exclusively to reflecting on our process, our educational values and beliefs, and our experiences in the classroom. Our diverse drama backgrounds, teaching experiences and classroom contexts prevented us from focusing too specifically on the details of our experience since we had few of these in common. But we were all teachers and we were all committed to providing the best possible learning opportunities for our students. These common values and purposes opened a space for a deeper level of reflection than might otherwise have been achieved.

Another advantage in our diversity was that we could be open and honest with each other since there were none of the political implications that arise when teachers on the same staff attempt to work collaboratively while still protecting their own "territory" within the institution. We had invested in each other out of choice rather than necessity and the

very act of choosing to meet with each other was an expression of commitment, trust and friendship. Commitment from choice rather than bureaucratically imposed expectations provided all members of our group with feelings of personal and joint ownership of the collaborative work.

My collaborative partners' diversity of experience with drama and the differences between their teaching contexts provided a particular advantage to me as an educational drama practitioner and researcher. I was able to witness, within the context of one research study, concrete evidence of Courtney's (1988) recommendation:

> Rather, a good drama teacher must search out the appropriate methods for the context: for rural as compared to urban students; for the age, ability and aptitude of the students; and for a particular class. In other words, appropriate methods are culturally bound (p.176).

The opportunity I had to move between classrooms and teachers on a daily basis allowed me to integrate my cognitive understanding of this truth at a tacit level of awareness and thus provided me with yet another opportunity to achieve praxis within my own instructional practice.

A further implication for future research relates to the age and teaching experience level of school-based educators who express an interest in teaching with drama. Hundert (1996) suggests "mid-career female teachers assigned to the youngest grade levels and experienced in one or more drama courses are the most likely teachers to use drama in the classroom" (p.30). Mary-Ellen and Carol meet all the criteria for belonging to this group except that neither teaches at the youngest grade levels. Perhaps educational drama researchers whose goal is to extend the instructional practice of educational drama in school classrooms should seek more opportunities to work with experienced rather than beginning or pre-service teachers. It may be that mature and experienced teachers are better equipped to meet the previously mentioned exceptional demands that are placed on the educator who "teaches with drama".

Because educational drama is perceived as "low status" by a majority of school-based educators (Stewig, 1984; Kaaland-Wells, 1994; Hundert, 1996) it may be unrealistic

for educational drama researchers to expect government, system-wide, or even site-based financial support for research aimed at supporting teachers to become competent users of educational drama teaching methodology. Research on teacher change (Fullan, 1991) and the words of my collaborative partners suggest to me that financial support may not be as important a factor as it is often touted to be in supporting innovation and teacher growth. Concern for the needs of classroom teachers and a passionate belief in the importance of drama to children's growth may be far more important attributes for the educational drama researcher. Such concern and passion should enable those of us whose careers are characterized by "teaching with drama" to make a difference -- one teacher at a time.

Conclusion

The epigram which introduces Chapter One, taken from the work of Augusto Boal (1995), encapsulates the opportunity this collaborative action research study provided to Carol, Mary-Ellen and me. We came together within the shared experience of learning about process drama in a summer school class. From that meeting, we struggled collaboratively to connect what we had experienced in that class to our individual and collective understandings of what drama could be in the English language arts classroom. We persevered in the face of constraints and challenges and found, within that perseverance, a strong bond of friendship and shared purpose. Through it all we were able to step back and "see ourselves seeing" in moments of reflection and speculation. If theatre is, as Boal says, born when a human being discovers that [she] can see [herself], then we did create a work of theatre in this collaborative action research study. But our "play" was more than the singular vision of one lone researcher. It was truly, for each and all of us, an exciting and rewarding collective creation.

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APPENDIX A

Questionnaire
for research project:
Becoming a teacher of drama

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect base line data and aid in the selection of participants for my doctoral research project. This project will utilize an action research design with the purpose of assisting teachers who wish to practise and implement process drama structures in their classroom instructional practice. Completion of this questionnaire is entirely voluntary and is totally unrelated to the requirements of EDSEC 401`/501. All responses will be kept in strictest confidence and any subsequent publication of reponses will utilize pseudonyms and other masking devices to protect the anonymity of respondents. A respondent's real name would be used only with the express request and consent of that respondent.

1. Briefly describe your current professional status: (undergraduate student, graduate student, certified but non-classroom based teacher, classroom teacher, other). Classroom teachers, please also describe your fall teaching assignment.

2. Briefly describe your past experience (if any) using drama as a teaching strategy in your classroom.

3. What motivated you to register for International Studies in Process Drama?

4. What do you expect to gain from this class professionally and/or personally?

5. What do you expect your students to gain from your participation in this class?

6. What expectations do you have for the effect of this class on your teaching practice?

7. What benefits do you think you might experience from meeting regularly with a small group of teachers to support each other in incorporating drama into group members' classroom programs?

8. What conditions would have to be met to make a drama support group a positive and energizing experience rather than one more obligation and demand on your time?

9. Can you describe specific topics or questions that are of interest to you that a drama support group might address?

10. Can you anticipate any challenges you might face in incorporating drama into your instructional repertoire? Please describe briefly.

11. Would you be willing to participate in peer feedback sessions as you practice using drama structures? In other words, would you be comfortable:

    a) having support group members in your classroom watching you teach with drama for purposes of self-assessment and reflection?

    b) videotaping drama lessons that you teach for viewing, reflection and discussion with a peer support group?

    c) other strategies for self-assessment or analysis?

12. Where in your classroom program do you expect to incorporate drama teaching strategies most frequently? Drama as a subject in its own right? Language Arts? Social Studies? Other?

13. Please add any further comments or questions that you have.

Consent Form

I consent to allowing my responses to this questionnaire to be used for research purposes only according to the terms and conditions outlined in the introduction on the first page of this questionnaire. I understand that my anonymity will be protected.

Date:_____ Signature_____

Name (please print)_____

Thank you!